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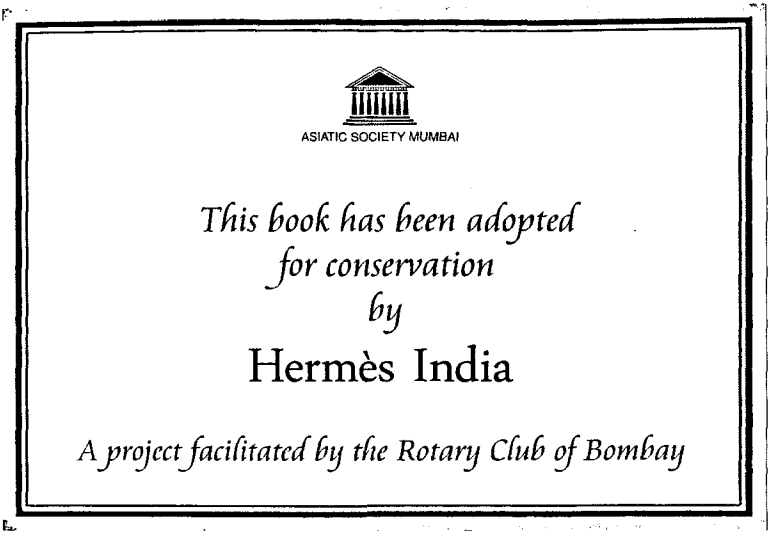

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THE BRITISH MUSEUM: ITS HISTORY AND TREASURES

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

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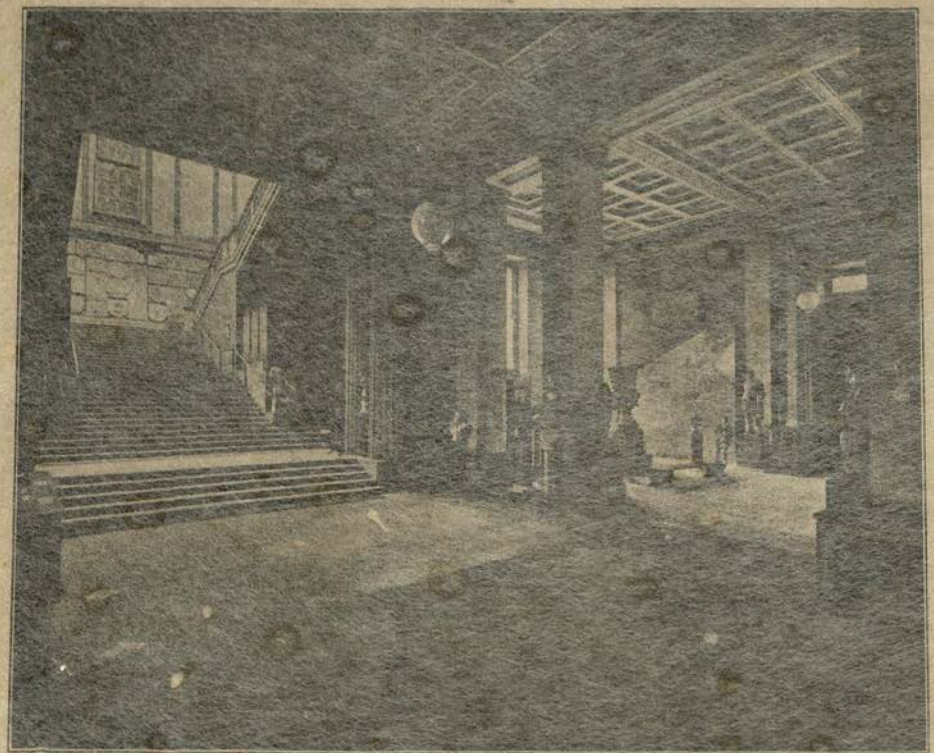

From Photograph by Donald Macbeth.

BRITISH MUSEUM: ENTRANCE HALL.

The British Museum: Its History and Treasures

A View of the Origins of that Great Institution, Sketches of Its Early Benefactors and Principal Officers, and a Survey of the Priceless Objects preserved within its Walls.

By [redacted]

Author of
"Inns and Taverns of Old London," etc.

Illustrated

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PREFACE

NOTWITHSTANDING the large additions to the literature of learning which have been made in exposition of the rich and varied stores of the British Museum, and the interesting sidelights which have been thrown on the history of that famous institution by such writers as Edward Edwards, Robert Cowtan, and others, the ensuing pages represent the first attempt to combine within the scope of a single volume an ordered history of the museum and a conspectus of its contents.

With regard to the first section, it is hoped that the narrative of the origins, foundation, and growth of the British Museum will give the reader a clear and sequent view of events, based, as it is, upon the evidence offered before Parliamentary Commissions, and upon careful research among other authoritative printed and original sources of information. Of course it would not have been difficult to amplify those historical chapters, and especially to have dealt at greater length with the careers of the earliest benefactors of the museum; but the porch had to bear some proportion to the house.

Consequently the larger share of the volume is devoted to the treasures of the museum, and than

the writer no one can be more conscious of the inadequacy of the space so apportioned. Seeing that the official guide-books already exceed thirty in number, and that these are but prefatory to a library of exhaustive treatises and catalogues the mere titles of which extend to twenty-four pages larger than this, it will be obvious that the eight chapters describing the various departments cannot make any pretence to completeness in detail. That is to say, the reader must not expect to find specific mention of every object in the different departments. Instead of attempting the impossible, the method adopted has been to give the reader a point of view, useful alike, it is hoped, either for a visit to the museum or for an arm-chair understanding of its contents. In pursuit of this plan the various departments have been frequently visited and closely studied, while for factual knowledge reliance has of course been placed upon the official publications, supplemented where necessary by reference to other authorities. By this method the reader is provided with such a concise outline of the phase of knowledge represented by each of the departments as will enable him to appreciate the interest and educational value of the objects displayed in those departments.

Among the volumes which have been useful in the preparation of these pages special mention should be made of Edward Edwards's "Lives of the

Founders of the British Museum;" Robert Cowtan's "Memories of the British Museum;" numerous reports of the Historical Manuscripts Commission; and the Dictionary of National Biography. It is too late in the day to eulogize the last-named invaluable work of reference, but the writer would fain avail himself of this opportunity to offer his tribute of sincere gratitude to the memory of George Smith for the rare prescience and noble liberality which he displayed in the inception and publication of that greatest of all biographical dictionaries.

One other considerable debt remains to be acknowledged. Upwards of forty of the illustrations in this volume are from the official guides to the British Museum, and it follows that for permission to use them the author has to thank, which he does in the heartiest manner, the public-spirited Trustees of that institution. Nor can he conclude these prefatory sentences without expressing his sense of gratitude to Dr. Frederic G. Kenyon, the Director and Principal Librarian, for his unfailing courtesy in connection with the preparation of this book.

H. C. S.

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I

THE BRITISH MUSEUM: ITS HISTORY

THE BRITISH MUSEUM: ITS HISTORY AND TREASURES

CHAPTER I

ORIGINS

If it be true that "a man is known by the friends he keeps," it follows that the letters he receives are an infallible index to his character. That was especially the case with Edward Harley, second Earl of Oxford. His mail-bag in the third and fourth decades of the eighteenth century was always heavily laden, and his correspondents numbered many of the most notable men of the age, including William Oldys, Richard Mead, Allan Ramsay, Richard Bentley, Alexander Pope and Jonathan Swift.

Social news and political happenings, commonplaces of courtesy and details of business were not lacking from my lord's correspondence, but the burden of many letters was wholly different. Here is one announcing the sale of the books and curiosities of a certain antiquary and offering to procure any items the Earl might fancy; in near company is a broadside catalogue of a sale of pictures; cheek by jowl is a receipt for money received for copying famous paintings; Swift, in another, laments that

he cannot find the "old Irish coins" desired by his friend, and later regrets that the medals he sent him "are perfect trash;" William Oldys offers an ancient manuscript as "a small instance" of his sincere gratitude; and so the story goes on. These letters tell what manner of man Edward Harley was; they reveal him as the friend of poets and men of letters, an encourager of learning, a lover of the arts, and an eager connoisseur.

Hardly, then, is it surprising to find among his papers three letters dispatched from London hard upon each other's heels, all relating to one particular catastrophe. The first bears the date of 23rd October, 1731, and tells how,

"This morning about four o'clock a fire broke out at Ashburnham House and consumed the greatest part of the Cottonian Library. I was present the whole time and saw a few cases preserved and some few books which were flung out of the window; but the whole house may be said to be consumed. The fire began, as Dr. Bentley told me, in a stove chimney, which had a wooden jamb in it, and was first discovered by himself, who being waked by his lady's coughing perceived a smell of wood smoke."

Three days later another letter reached the Earl. This was from Dr. Richard Mead — who as Pope's physician placed that poet on a diet of asses' milk — and gave a more reassuring report. The doctor had not trusted to hearsay, but had visited the

scene of the fire and learned that "half the manuscripts" had been destroyed. "A great loss this," he added, "and I cannot but reflect, with how much concern, I have heard your Lordship's great father complain that care was not taken to maintain and keep in due repair the Cotton House, that the library might have been perpetually kept there. Dr. Bentley says that this calamity is the Nemesis of Cotton's ghost to punish the neglect in taking due care of his noble gift to the public."

And then a third letter completed the story, much as the successive editions of a modern newspaper tone down the alarms of earlier reports. The writer was Dr. Robert Freind, headmaster of Westminster School, who was able to assure the Earl of Oxford that "four parts in five" of the manuscripts had been saved. Still, it was a "sad calamity," sufficiently grave to warrant him in offering the new dormitory of his school as a temporary home for the "relics" of Cotton's great library. He had given refuge, too, to Bentley himself, notwithstanding that his conversation was "not the most polite" and "made the women stare strangely." Excuses might be made for a man who had been driven from home by a disastrous fire.

Out of the ashes of that fire arose the British Museum.

But the curious in origins may go back to a period antedating by many years the lifetime of Sir Robert

Cotton. In fact such an inquirer might claim unlimited license in his backward glance, arguing that if Washington Irving was justified in making his mysterious Knickerbocker commence his history of New York with the creation, there is no reason why the pedigree of the British Museum should stop short of that event. On the Darwinian hypothesis the birds of the air preceded the advent of man, and even the record in Genesis gives them a day's start, all of which is of moment when the collecting predilections of the Jackdaw and the connoisseurship of the Bower-Bird are kept in mind. Darwin argued that the gayly-ornamented playing passages of the Bower-Bird imply a sense of beauty, and even if those feathered collectors of shells and feathers and bones and leaves indulge their whim with a view to amorous victories, how are they different from those human bipeds who have been known to frequent museums for the purpose of courtship?

Surely, however, the serious investigator is on solid ground when he pleads that the existence of a museum postulates many things. It assumes, for example, that there are manuscripts and books, and curiosities and works of art; that men have grown cultured enough to appreciate them; that some of those men have the wealth necessary for their acquisition; and that, as life draws to a close, the owners of these treasures are dowered with suffi-

cient altruism to bequeath them for the enjoyment of others.

Museums, in fact, are possible only when a nation has reached a high state of civilization. That such an institution should have existed in England in, say, the fifteenth century is unthinkable. "These English," reported the Spaniards who visited the country with Philip II, "have their houses made of sticks and dirt, but they fare commonly as well as the king." The body rather than the spirit held supremacy then. Not until the reign of Henry VI did brick come into general use for building purposes; prior to that time houses were constructed of wood, without chimneys, and with either lattice-work or oiled linen or horn for windows. "The walls were commonly bare," says Hallam, "without wainscot or even plaster; except that some great houses were furnished with hangings, and that perhaps hardly so soon as the reign of Edward IV. It is unnecessary to add, that neither libraries of books nor pictures could have found a place among furniture. Silver plate was very rare, and hardly used for the table. A few inventories of furniture that still remain exhibit a miserable deficiency." Save for the satisfying of gross appetites, life centred in the fields rather than in the home; hunting and hawking were the theme of song and the prime object of existence.

One exception must be made. The protest made

to Haggai, "Is it time for you, O ye, to dwell in your cieled houses, and this house lie waste?" could not justly have been addressed to the Englishman of the dark ages; however poor and comfortless his own dwelling, he lavished all his skill and much of his wealth on the house of prayer. The churches of his villages and the cathedrals of his cities provided him with objects for the exercise of such æsthetic taste as he possessed; and that fact should lessen the surprise which is sometimes expressed when those sacred buildings are found to contain such articles as the modern mind usually associates with a museum. The fact is, the parish church was not only the store-house and armory of the fifteenth century, where corn and wool were deposited in unsettled days and weapons hoarded, but it was also the only museum. "Its shrines were hung with the strange new things which English sailors had begun to bring across the great seas — with 'horns of unicorns,' ostrich eggs, or walrus tusks, or the rib of a whale given by Sebastian Cabot."

All this, however, might have counted for little had not some new and potent factor come into existence. That factor was provided by the Renaissance. Wisely has Sidney Lee insisted that the Renaissance was far more than a literary revival; "it was a regeneration of human sentiment, a new birth of intellectual, æsthetic, and spiritual aspiration. Life throughout its sweep was invested with

a new significance and a new potentiality. While sympathy was awakened with the ideas and forms of Greek and Latin literature, other forces were helping to kindle a sense of joy, a love of beauty, a lively interest in animate and inanimate nature — of an unprecedented quality. The past fails to account for all the new growth of artistic sensibility, of intellectual and spiritual curiosity." It is a commonplace that the era of the Renaissance was not the same in all countries; that its influence was first felt in Italy, and that it then passed to France and Southern Germany, and, finally, at the opening of the seventeenth century, reached England. Not until about the middle of Elizabeth's reign did it become the fashion for the young Englishman of rank and wealth to complete his education by travel on the Continent and the study of the antiquities and ruins, the libraries and picture galleries of France and Italy. Prior to that time he had kept on "his dunghill" and grown "stubborn and churlish;" travel "sweetened" him and made him acquainted with the graces of life and "treasuries of jewels and robes, cabinets and rarities." In short, as the seventeenth century drew near, the Englishman was unconsciously preparing for the foundation of the British Museum.

To pick and choose among the men who contributed to that preparation is a difficult task. Some, perhaps, would be disposed to give prominence to

Sir Philip Sidney, for did not his friend declare that there was not an approved painter, or skilful engineer, or excellent musician, or any other famed artificer that refrained from seeking his patronage? No doubt that illustrious soldier and poet was a zealous friend of learning, but for the purpose immediately in view it seems more just to lay emphasis upon the influence of William Camden. That influence appears to have been overlooked by all historians of the British Museum. Yet there is no denying the fact that Camden was exceedingly sensitive to the spirit of the Renaissance, and that he was a principal cause in fostering in others "artistic sensibility" and "intellectual curiosity." He has told us that as a boy he had a natural inclination towards antiquities, and that while a young man at Oxford he devoted all his spare time to his favourite pursuit. Now it should be remembered that for eighteen years he was second master of Westminster School, that for six years he held the position of headmaster there, and that a tutor cannot fail to impress upon his pupils the predominant trait of his own character. When it is added that Robert Cotton was a scholar at Westminster in Camden's time it becomes obvious that, so far as the British Museum is concerned, the famous antiquary has a title to remembrance in any discussion of the origins of that institution. But Camden's influence accounted for far more than the

collecting passion of Robert Cotton; it is impossible to examine the manuscript records of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century without coming to the conclusion that the Westminster schoolmaster inspired many another pupil with that "intellectual curiosity" which made the British Museum possible. One example only need be cited — the case of Thomas Howard, second Earl of Arundel, who received his earliest education at Westminster, and is credited with having formed the first large collection of works of art in England, and was honoured by Walpole by the appellation of "the Father of Vertu in England." Such illustrations of the influence of Camden might be multiplied, but it is sufficient to emphasize the fact that it was from him Robert Cotton acquired that appetite for rare manuscripts which was to give him an enviable position among the founders of the British Museum.

CHAPTER II

THE EARLIEST BENEFACTORS

Of the three names which are mentioned in the Act of Parliament which resulted in the British Museum taking definite form, that of Sir Robert Cotton is the last. It ought to have been first. For his famous library had already been the possession of the nation for half a century.

Cotton himself had been in his grave more than seventy years before his unique collection passed into official keeping. Born in 1571, at Denton in Huntingdonshire, within a few miles of the family seat at Connington, he, as has been noted in the previous chapter, received his earliest education at Westminster School under the tuition of William Camden. From Westminster he passed to Cambridge, where, as his earliest biographers gravely stated, he "took the degree of B. A. in 1575." At that date he would not have been much more than four years old! The facts are that he entered Jesus College in 1581 and proceeded to his degree four years after. Some six or seven years later he set up his own establishment, marrying an heiress, and settling in a Thames-side house in Westminster, the site of which is now covered by a part of the House

SIR ROBERT B. COTTON.

of Lords. This building, Cotton House, was to be the antiquary's town abode for the remainder of his life.

That the proximity of Cotton House to Westminster School allowed its young master to renew and develop his boyhood friendship with Camden may be taken for granted; in fact it is hardly exceeding probability to conclude that Cotton's decision to make his London home at Westminster may have been influenced by Camden's presence there. In 1600, when Cotton was in his thirtieth year, he kept the author of "Britannia" company on a long tour through the north of England, devoted to the examination of battlefields, the exploration of abbeys, and an industrious gleaning of all kinds of antiquarian lore. The comradeship of the two knew no break; as Cotton gradually acquired his manuscript treasures they were always freely placed at the disposal of his whilom master; and in one of the last letters Camden dictated, to which his feeble hand could contribute nothing more than a tremulous signature, there is a reference to Cotton as "the dearest of all my friends."

Exactly when and under what circumstances the founder of the Cottonian library acquired his first manuscript, and the subject of that manuscript, are unknown. It is plain, however, that he had not long taken up his abode at Cotton House before he began collecting manuscripts and coins, and all kinds of

antiquarian curiosities. In the last decade of the sixteenth century he became a member of the Antiquarian Society, which had been founded about 1572, and so widened his acquaintance among such kindred spirits as John Selden, Richard Carew of Antony, and John Speed. The second, indeed, appears to have been a member of Cotton's own proposing; hence Carew's reference to that "sweete and respected Antiquarian Society, into which your kyndenesse towardes mee and grace with them made mee an Entrance." Another remark made by Carew is illuminating. He had lately seen a book dedicated to one named Cotton, and was convinced that the one so honoured was none other than his correspondent, for, he added, "A man shall hardly fynde any other to concurre so jumpe with you both in name and affeccion to Antiquities." These are not mere compliments; Cotton had indeed by now — the date is 1605 — won "grace" with all learned men and fame for his devotion to the lore of the past. If proof is demanded, two convincing witnesses can be cited. The first is Thomas Bodley, the founder of Oxford's famous library, who, in 1601, is discovered soliciting the help of Cotton in carrying out his plan to furnish the University with "bookes;" the second is Richard Verstegan, that zealous Catholic who became an exile rather than subscribe to reformed religion, and from his retreat at Antwerp owned, in 1609, to being well acquainted

with Cotton's "worthynesse." He sent him, though a "woorthelesse token," the tongue of a fish, "which tyme hath converted into a stone," thus paying what tribute he could to Cotton's collecting zeal.

Several years, however, before Carew's eulogies, and Bodley's flattering request, and Verstegan's tribute from across the North Sea, Cotton's growing reputation for curious lore had been recognized in a conclusive manner. His services had been requisitioned by Queen Elizabeth herself. In connection with the arrangement at Calais of a treaty between the English queen and the king of Spain, the ambassadors of the two sovereigns had fallen into dispute as to which should have precedence over the other. Cotton was already so well known for his intimacy with ancient records and old-time state ritual, that he was commanded to search into the matter, which he did in an exhaustive manner, advancing seven reasons why precedence belonged to Elizabeth's representative.

That royal commission led to the greatest sorrow of Cotton's life. It took him from his library to the steps of the throne, from the abstract study of ancient precedents to their application to contemporary affairs, from the peaceful retirement of the scholar to the turbulent publicity of the statesman. Surely it is significant that in the year following Elizabeth's commission he became a member of

Parliament, and that by the time James I succeeded to the throne he was in close relations with the leading statesmen of the day. His antiquarian tastes commended him to the new sovereign, who called him "cousin" in recognition of his descent from the Bruces. Nor would James be indifferent to the fact that Cotton had secured for his new country house at Connington the complete timbers, panelling, and ceiling of the room in which Mary Stuart had been executed at Fotheringay. One way and another Cotton was confirmed in his divided allegiance; he entered Parliament a second time; undertook to re-apply more antiquarian knowledge to modern instances; accepted an appointment to inquire into the state of the navy; discussed with the king how the royal revenues might be increased; and generally gave up to the state what should have been devoted to learning. In one respect his intimacy with the king made for the enrichment of his library. So much pleasure did James take in discussing antiquarian subjects with Cotton that, in a fit of amazing generosity, he issued a special order empowering him to collect manuscripts.

Yet, could he have foreseen the end of all this royal favour and interference in politics, it is probable that Cotton would have kept away from court and Parliament and been content to add to his treasures with the unaided power of his own purse. Once mixed up with statecraft, however, he was led

on and on until he found himself the companion of Eliot, Pym, and the rest, and reached the usual goal — a prison cell. There is no occasion in such a connection as the present to tell in detail the story of Cotton's political activities; it is sufficient to note that in due time they led to his falling under the suspicions of Charles I and the court party, and that the tracing to his shelves of a copy of what was accounted a seditious pamphlet resulted in his arrest and the sealing up of his beloved library. Even when he was released from confinement, his manuscripts were still denied him; they remained under lock and seal, and only in the presence of an official of the council could he have any access whatever to the treasures he had amassed through so many years and at such enormous cost.

Far pleasanter to dwell upon is that aspect of his career which reveals him in close friendship with men of letters, recalls the "good cheer" of his hospitality, and shows him diligently adding treasure to treasure and opening his stores with generous hand to industrious scholars. Honour enough would it have been for most men to be counted the friend of Sir Walter Raleigh, of Bacon, of Ben Jonson, as Cotton was. His house by the side of the Thames, with its ever-growing library, was the congenial resort of those immortals and many more of somewhat lesser fame. The most casual glance over the letters addressed to him leaves

a glowing impression of his helpfulness to scholars. Now it is Camden who, that in his solitariness he may "avoid the deadly sinne of Slouth," is an urgent applicant for manuscripts and books; anon there are hurrying and earnest letters from John Speed, begging information for his "History of Great Britain," soliciting the loan of coins for illustration, imploring aid in proof-reading, and making frequent acknowledgment of corrections already received; from John Borough there are offers of services to buy rare treasures for Cotton's "Jewel house;" from Dr. Ussher a promise of a unique manuscript; from Sir John Ware a gift of an abbey register and a significant wish that the donor had "the happiness, by having some employment in England, to enjoy your company and the use of your excellent Library oftener than I do."

And so the sixty years of Robert Cotton's life wore to their close. It seems probable that the reverses which accrued from his interference in politics hastened his end. That, at any rate, was his own belief. When he was released from confinement he had little more than a year to live, but those final months were saddened by the loss of his beloved library. All appeals for its restoration were vain; two such appeals he made in the month in which he was to pass away, and in one he pleaded that his cherished manuscripts were being injured

from lack of air. That, too, was futile. And the antiquary became a changed man. "When I went several times to visit and comfort him in the year 1630," wrote one of his friends, "he would tell me 'they had broken his heart that had locked up his library from him.' He was so out-worn, within a few months, with anguish and grief, as his face, which had formerly been ruddy and well coloured (such as the picture I have of him shows) was changed into a grim blackish paleness, near to the resemblance and hue of a dead visage." And again, a little before he died, when a messenger from court came and hinted at a restoration to royal favour, Cotton merely replied, "You come too late, my heart is broken." If one could have looked into that heart, said another of his friends, "My Library" would have been found inscribed there as Queen Mary declared "Calais" was deeply printed on hers.

When Cotton died on a day early in May, 1631, he left behind him such a collection of source material for English history as has rarely been equalled; indeed it has been asserted that writers upon the history and antiquities of Great Britain have been more indebted to the inexhaustible treasures of the Cottonian library than to all other sources together. "His rich collection of Saxon charters proved the foundation of the scholarly study of pre-Norman-English history. . . . Orig-

inal authorities for every period of English history were in his possession."

Some few years after Sir Robert's death the library was restored to his son, Sir Thomas Cotton, who continued his father's generous policy of allowing students free access to its treasures. From Sir Thomas it descended to Sir John Cotton, who, two years before his death, announced his intention of giving it to the nation. At first it seemed as though Oxford University might be enriched by the collection, for in 1698 the honest Humfrey Wanley, whom we shall meet again as the custodian of the Harleian library, wrote that a servant of Sir John had told him, under the rose, of his master's intention to bestow some of his chief treasures in that quarter. Although Sir John Cotton died before any final arrangements were made for making the library generally accessible, his gift was definitely concluded by 1700, and thus the first foundation stone of the British Museum was well and truly laid.

One glimpse of the inside of the library about this time has survived in a gossipy letter from London. The writer was engaged mainly in buying books for a country gentleman, and hence was probably correct in thinking an account of his "short view" of the Cottonian library would interest his employer. Dating his letter 15th October, 1692, he wrote:

"I had a short view of Sir R. Cotton's Library.

It is situated adjoining to the House of Commons at Westminster, of a great height, and part of that old fabric, but very narrow, as I remember, not full six feet in breadth, and not above twenty six in length; the books placed on each side, of a tolerable height, so that a man of an indifferent stature may reach the highest. Over the books are the Roman Emperors, I mean, their heads, in brass statues, which serve for standards in the catalogue, to direct to find any particular book, that is, under such an Emperor's head, such an number. I had not time to look into the books; some relics I took notice of, besides the books; viz., I saw there Sir H. Spelman's and Buchanan's pictures, well done; also, Ben Jonson's and Sir R. Cotton's, and in the stairs was Wicliff's. I had in my hand the sword of Hugh Lupus, Earl of Chester, that came in with the Conquest. I saw Pope Eugenius' Bull to the King of England; the original in a fair Greek character in parchment, anno 1500 [?] and odd years. Instead of wax seals, were the cardinals' heads in metal, that subscribed it. I also saw Dr. Dee's instruments of conjuration, in cakes of beeswax almost petrified, with the images, lines, and figures on it."

Thirty years after the death of Cotton another of the earliest benefactors of the British Museum saw the light of day. This was that Robert Harley who was to give his name to a London thorough-

fare, become the intimate friend of Swift and Pope, be described as "the Mæcenas of learned men in his time," experience the triumphs and defeats of a political career, and found that library which, in the opinion of Dr. Johnson, excelled any other in the value as well as the number of volumes it contained.

No one acquainted with the Harley ancestry would have predicted that one of that name would become a patron of learning and the arts. The father and grandfather of Robert were Puritans of the dourest type, especially the latter, who hated images and pictures with a consuming hatred. In the family letters of that Sir Robert Harley is a brief note penned by his daughter which tells how there had been brought to her father "a most horrible picture of the Great God of Heaven and Earth, which he broke all to pieces." That was a congenial task. Another document in the family archives is a copy of a stern order addressed to a couple of churchwardens charging them on their peril to immediately destroy the crosses and crucifixes and stained-glass windows of their church. Two years later Sir Robert Harley was appointed to a task which gave him large liberty for his iconoclastic zeal. This was in 1644, when the Parliamentary party was getting the upper hand in the civil war, and Puritanism grasping at the reins of power. A part of the programme of the hour was to cleanse

ROBERT HARLEY, EARL OF OXFORD.

Westminster Abbey of its "monuments of superstition and idolatry," and Harley was given command of the committee appointed to achieve that end. He revelled in the task. Among the documents which impeach and condemn Puritanism for its ruthless hostility to the graces of life there is none richer in damning counts than that which sets forth the sums of money paid by Sir Robert Harley for the spoliation of Westminster Abbey. To-day the desecrater hands out six shillings for "three days work in planing out some pictures in the Abbey," to-morrow it is ten shillings for "taking down the high altar in Henry the Seventh's Chapel," anon there are more liberal payments for the demolition of angels and crosses and "colouring the boards from which the carpenter had planed off the pictures." The list, in fact, is nigh endless. It makes the spirit groan to note its detailed sacrilege. What treasures of the brush curled into shavings under those Puritan planes, what beauties of colour and form fell into splintered fragments as those Puritan hammers smashed the storied panes of glass! But Sir Robert looked on and paid his bills in the conviction that he was doing God service.

Was it consciousness of the iniquity of this impious work which made the grandson a connoisseur? Had he not been of so secretive a nature, so adverse to frankness in everything relating to his own views or actions, Robert Harley might have

left some answer to that natural question. The explorer among the Harley papers must surely find his hopes rising high when he comes upon a document in which the founder of the library, being alone in an inn on a journey, wrote a page or two of his autobiography. But that document is scanned in vain for an explanation of why and when he first began to collect ancient manuscripts, rare books, and choice engravings. Indeed it does not make the least mention of that library which will perpetuate his name when those political achievements of which he was so proud are wholly forgotten.

One of Harley's biographers, however, has given the year 1705 as the date when he acquired the nucleus of his famous collection. But that can hardly be correct. Four years earlier Humfrey Wanley had been sent to Harley with a strong recommendation as one who "has the best skill in ancient hands and MSS. of any man not only of this, but I believe, of any former age," and it is difficult to understand why so well-qualified a librarian should have been commended to Harley if he did not already possess a considerable library. Again, a year later, Harley was appointed a trustee of the Cottonian library, a fact which postulates something in his favour as a book and manuscript expert. Further, about the same time "all learned men at Oxford" had a "particular esteem and

veneration" for him, and erudite scholars were inscribing their tomes with his names. These facts make it practically certain that Robert Harley began to accumulate manuscripts and books some years prior to 1705, though that he was a bibliophile from his youth, as is sometimes stated, may be open to question.

Perhaps the year 1705 has been carelessly assigned because it was then he became the possessor of the "precious library" of Sir Symonds D'Ewes. There is a story to the effect that Harley urged Queen Anne to purchase D'Ewes's valuable collection, but that she declined on the plea that "while the blood and honour of the nation was at stake in her wars, she could not, till she had secured her *living* subjects an honourable peace, bestow their money upon *dead* letters." And so, the story concludes, Harley "stretched his own purse, and gave £6000 for the library." Which is somewhat of an exaggeration. Wanley was the intermediary in the transaction, for he seems to have kept closely in touch with Harley after his introduction in 1701, and he redeemed that promise he made to the statesman that, if he desired D'Ewes's treasures, he should have them "cheaper than any other person whatsoever." The sum actually given by Harley has been put down at five hundred pounds, but the total cost, on Wanley's own evidence, was fifty pounds in excess of that amount. Even at the

higher figure the library was an astonishing bargain, and Wanley's part in its acquisition may well have been the factor which determined Harley to take that astute barterer into his own service.

Whatever be the actual date of the foundation of the Harleian library, it had attained unusual proportions in 1707. Letters of that year refer to it as a "noble library," "a valuable store of manuscripts," and, on the old principle that to him that hath shall be given, not a month passed without its treasures being increased by gifts of books and manuscripts. One example may be cited in illustration. The donor in this case was Elizabeth Elstob, that zealous Anglo-Saxon scholar whose appetite for languages was cultivated despite the opposition of that guardian who declared that "one tongue was enough for a woman." The story of her gift to the Harleian library is told in a quaint letter by Dr. George Hicks:

"My Saxon mistress, as I call Mrs. Elstob, was with me about a fortnight since. I then asked her what was become of her curious copy of the *Textus Roffensis,* which she intended to present to my Lord Treasurer; she said it was in his Lordship's library. I asked her then what my Lord said, when she presented it to him; she replied that she was ashamed to present it to him, but put it in his library, without presenting it to him or desiring Mr. Wanley to shew it to him. At this answer I was

much troubled, and chid her for her sheepish modesty, because I knew my Lord would have been pleased with the admirable transcript, which is as like to the original as ever any copy of a picture was to its original."

By the date of this letter Robert Harley had become the Earl of Oxford — it was right, Queen Anne said, that he "who is himself learned, and a patron of learning, should happily take his title from that city where letters do so gloriously flourish" — and was more than ever immersed in the political strifes and intrigues of the day.

But was Dr. Hicks justified in crediting his Lordship with so genuine an interest in scholarship? Was Harley a Mæcenas for show or of honest intent? Did he deserve the "particular esteem and veneration" of Oxford scholars? Was his library dear to his heart or merely an expression of his pride? Macaulay would not have hesitated in his answers to such questions. A passionate Whig himself, the historian had little but scorn for a renegade from that camp, such as Harley became. Hence his verdict that Harley's intellect was "both small and slow," that his verses were "more execrable than the bellman's," and that his reputation as a deep thinking statesman was "supported with that cunning which is frequently found in company with ambitious and unquiet mediocrity." All this is a severe judgment, but that it

is in the main accurate seems highly probable. Macaulay made a bad blunder by deriding Harley's poetic talent on the score of verses which were eventually found to be Dryden's, but that Harley was a learned man, a scholar in the uncorrupted use of that word, and that he had a bibliophile's passion for ancient manuscripts and rare books is at least open to question. Certainly in all his voluminous correspondence there is nothing to support that view of his character. Like Sir Robert Cotton, he, too, made the acquaintance of a cell in the Tower, but there is no lament that his heart was broken because he was exiled from his library. If it be urged that he was allowed books in his imprisonment, as was the case, it may be answered that, so far as evidence goes, the works he asked for were such as bore upon political affairs. "I wanted him," he wrote his son concerning one author, "for a discourse between Augustus and Livia about the best way to confirm his new government; it is an excellent piece." It is true that Matthew Prior one morning wrote this inedited couplet in Harley's library,

> "Fame counting thy books, my dear Harley, shall tell,
> No man had so many, who knew them so well;"

but it would be idle to attach serious importance to a poetic compliment written in the early eighteenth century.

With Edward Harley, however, the only son of Robert and his successor to the title of Earl of Oxford, the case seems to have been different. While at Oxford, and not yet twenty years old, his expenditure for the half year included over twenty-five pounds for books and more than sixteen pounds for bindings, these sums together representing more than a third of his expenses for the six months. The young booklover was evidently alarmed when he saw those figures, for in sending his account to his father he wrote:

"I am extremely ashamed of the two articles that have so great a share in it; I mean what's paid to the bookseller and bookbinder. I have nothing to say in excuse for my fault but only that as it is the first of this sort that ever I was guilty of, so I assure you it shall be the last."

Alas for good intentions! Edward Harley would have died a richer man had he kept that youthful resolve. The fact is, however, that, like his father, he always had a weakness for gorgeous bindings, and throughout his career as a collector he frequently bought books, manuscripts, and miscellaneous curiosities at prices far in excess of their real worth. Not that he was always what is known as an "easy mark;" and, besides, for several years his treasury was faithfully protected by the astute Wanley. Once that guardian was removed he was

pestered incessantly. Here is one Thomas Baston who wants thirty guineas for three drawings, but a few days later is content to take what Harley thinks "they may deserve;" on another occasion the Earl protests that he has been asked too high a price for some manuscripts, makes a reduced offer, and begs his agent not to let the owner know who is bidding for the papers. A dealer in old prints once angled for a large order on the plea that the collection he offered contained a thousand more heads of eminent men "than the king of France has in his collection," but whether the bait was taken is not recorded.

Perhaps Edward Harley's inborn indolence saved his pocket more pounds than his judgment. In one case that indolence was protracted till it became cruelty. Towards the end of 1719 Dr. John Covel, the venerable master of Christ's College, Cambridge, sent Harley his laboriously compiled catalogue of the miscellaneous curiosities which he had collected in strange lands, and offered to accept for them whatever price was agreed upon by two or three "equal and indifferent judges." The old man's eulogium at the close of his letter ought to have been rewarded with a prompt decision.

"There is no man living," he wrote, "who shall more than myself devoutly honour, or more zealously applaud, your most truly noble and glorious

EDWARD HARLEY, EARL OF OXFORD.

enterprise for outvying the Vatican and the great Ptolemy himself, by your magnificent structures, and exquisite collections of books and all other monuments of antiquities and curiosities, which may in all manner of literature advance the glory of your own nation, and eternally oblige the whole learned world."

Notwithstanding that stately panegyric, nineteen months later Harley was still undecided whether to buy or decline. Then came several piteous letters from the aged owner. He "begged" an answer one way or the other; he was four score years and four and this incertitude would "certainly shorten" his life; if Harley had lost his catalogue he was "utterly undone;" his infirmities were many and increased daily; "therefore pity me, oh pity me, by your speedy and gracious answer." The old man wrote no more; three months later he was dead.

One excuse may be offered for Edward Harley, and one only. At this time his father, the Earl of Oxford, was still alive and may have limited his expenditure. On the other hand, however, it is clear from the family letters that for several years before the Earl of Oxford's death Lord Harley had virtually superseded him in all matters connected with the library and additions to its treasures. Hence it was to Lord Harley rather than to the Earl of Oxford that the faithful Wanley made his

reports about his progress with the catalogue, and he it is instead of his father who is spoken of as making purchases or receiving gifts for the collection.

For all these cases of spasmodic and sometimes stubborn cautiousness, Edward Harley, especially after he became Earl of Oxford in 1724, made copious and valuable additions to the family library. And that he made them in the spirit of the true connoisseur there can be little doubt. Before he succeeded to the title, but especially directly afterwards, the Harley correspondence underwent a notable change. Instead of copious letters on political themes, the outpourings of statesmen and place-hunters, the reports of spies and the records of intrigues, we find the graceful epistles of wits and poets, the earnest correspondence of learned antiquaries, and the business-like missives of dealers in vertu. As was claimed in the previous chapter, the character of this correspondence proclaimed the man to whom it was addressed. Whatever Edward Harley's faults of indolence and extravagance — extravagance which finally crippled his finances and left him a practically ruined man — it is surely to his praise that he preferred the society of poets and men of letters to that of gamblers and debauchers, and that, to apply to him alone that language which Dr. Johnson used for father as well as son, he dedicated to literature and

generous and exalted curiosity that time and fortune which others of his rank employed in the pursuit of contemptible amusements or the gratification of guilty passions.

When all this is duly recognized, who can feel other than a pang of regret that some more divine poet than Soame Jenyns did not exercise his muse in praise of the Harleian library? Yet, in the absence of a more inspired eulogy, the lines, written by Jenyns in the library itself, deserve to be recalled in the present connection:

"Who, uninspir'd, can tread this sacred ground,
With all the sons of fame encompass'd round?
Where, crown'd with wreaths of ever-verdant bays,
Each sister art her willing charms displays:
Mellow'd by time, here beauteous paintings glow,
There marble busts illustrious faces show:
And in old coins are little heroes seen,
With venerable rust of ages green:
Around, unwounded by the teeth of age,
By Gothic fire, and persecution's rage,
Perfect and fair unnumber'd volumes stand,
By Providence preserv'd for Oxford's hand.
Whilst thus within these magic walls I stray,
At once all climes and ages I survey:
On fancy's wings I fly from shore to shore,
Recall past time, and live whole eras o'er:
Converse with heroes fam'd in ancient song,
And bards, by whom those heroes breathe so long:
Observe the quick migrations learning makes,
How harass'd nations trembling she forsakes,

And hastes away to build her downy nest
In happier climes, with peace and plenty bless'd.
See how, in fam'd Augustus' golden days,
Wit triumphs, crown'd with universal praise!
Approaches thrones with a majestic air,
The prince's mistress, and the statesman's care.
Mæcenas shines in ev'ry classic page,
Mæcenas once the Harley of his age.
Nor with less glory she her charms display'd,
In Albion once when royal Anna sway'd."

But the curious in details may be anxious to learn something of the extent of this famous library. At the death of the first earl there were upwards of six thousand volumes of manuscripts, more than fourteen thousand charters and rolls, while the printed books extended to some twenty thousand volumes. When the second earl, Edward Harley, died in 1741, the manuscript volumes had increased to nearly eight thousand and the printed books to some fifty thousand, while of pamphlets and such ephemeræ the total amounted to nearly four hundred thousand. In addition, Harley's treasures included over forty thousand prints and a varied and choice collection of coins, medals and portraits.

Less than a year after Edward Harley's death his widow had sold not only the coins, medals, and portraits, but also the printed books, engravings, and pamphlets. The latter were purchased *en bloc* by the famous bookseller, Thomas Osborne, for thirteen thousand pounds — a sum which would not

have discharged the binder's bill. Even at that paltry price, however, Osborne found his purchase a veritable white elephant. In his perplexity as to how to handle such a vast store of books, he wrote to Dr. Birch announcing his purchase of "a more valuable collection than perhaps was ever in the hands of any Bookseller," and expressing his desire of "consulting the learned with regard to the disposal of it." The learned could not have enlightened him to any extent, for his sales were slow and his profits in no relation to his large investment.

A better fate was reserved for the Harleian manuscripts. The Countess of Oxford was something of an antiquary herself, or, rather, an amateur in genealogy. She relieved the tedium of her widowhood by piecing together all kinds of odds and ends of information concerning the families with which she was connected, and no doubt found much to amuse or interest her in the Harleian manuscripts. And so they escaped the saleroom. But in March, 1753, she received in rapid succession two letters which altered her point of view. The one was from James West, that member of Parliament who combined politics with antiquarian research; the other from Henry Drummond, then Bishop of St. Asaph but afterwards Archbishop of York, and always a patron of learning and art. Each letter was to the same effect. There had been a discussion in the

House of Commons in favour of providing a permanent home for the Cottonian library and the Sloane museum, and as complimentary references had been made during the debate to the value of the Harleian manuscripts, it occurred to both her ladyship's correspondents that she might be disposed to consider their transference to the national treasures. Mr. West mentioned that the sum of ten thousand pounds had been named as a possible purchase price.

What was the Countess to do? She soon made up her mind to refer the decision to her daughter and son-in-law, the Duchess and Duke of Portland. "I desire," she wrote, "the Duke and you to consider what answer is best to return. If to sell them, I think twenty thousand pounds should be the lowest price to ask. . . . If you think that money cannot be got, I leave it to you to make the best bargain you can for me." But the Duke and Duchess were not inclined towards bargaining; in the true spirit of *noblesse oblige* the Duchess wrote to the Speaker of the House of Commons:

"Though I am told the expense of collecting them was immense and that if they were to be dispersed they would probably sell for a great deal of money, yet as a sum has been named and as I know it was my father's will and is my mother's intention that they should be kept together, I will not bargain with the public. I give you this trouble

therefore to acquaint you that I am ready to accept of your proposal upon condition that this great and valuable collection shall be kept together in a proper repository as an addition to the Cotton library and be called by the name of the Harleian collection of manuscripts. I hope you do me the justice to believe that I do not consider this as a sale for an adequate price but your idea is so right and agreeable to what I know was my father's intention that I have a particular satisfaction in contributing all I can to facilitate the success of it."

And so the Harleian manuscripts, by far the most valuable portion of the famous library, passed into the keeping of the British nation.

One other early benefactor of the British Museum remains to be mentioned: Sir Hans Sloane. In the order of chronology he comes last as a collector; in the practical result of his generosity he was the immediate cause of the museum taking objective form when it did. This, no doubt, is the reason why he is sometimes referred to as the sole founder of that institution.

Few physicians of the seventeenth and eighteenth century had so varied, so prosperous, so honourable, or so protracted a career as Hans Sloane. His name figures frequently in the literature of the eighteenth century, and when he had still twenty-five years to live he was made the target of Edward Young's satiric muse. Not yet had the poet

brought his "churchyard contemplations to market" in his "Night Thoughts;" he was vying with Pope in lashing the fashions and foibles of the hour. As Sloane was not a politician from whom the poet could hope for preferment, there could be no loss in enshrining him in such lines as these:

"But what in oddness can be more sublime
Than Sloane, the foremost toyman of his time?
His nice ambition lies in curious fancies,
His daughter's portion a rich shell inhances,
And Ashmole's baby-house is, in his view,
Britannia's golden mine, a rich Peru!
How his eyes languish! how his thoughts adore
That painted coat, which Joseph never wore!
He shows, on holidays, a sacred pin,
That touched the ruff, that touched Queen Bess's chin.
'Since that great dearth our chronicles deplore,
Since that great plague that swept as many more,
Was ever year unblest as this?' he'll cry,
'It has not brought us one new butterfly!'"

Born in Ireland, in 1660, Hans Sloane studied medicine at Paris and Montpelier, the latter town having been, it will be remembered, famous for its medical school since the twelfth century. At Montpelier it was the good fortune of Sloane to make the acquaintance of William Courten, who deepened in the young student that strong inclination towards the study of nature which had characterized him from his earliest years. Having taken his degree and been admitted a fellow of the College of Phy-

SIR HANS SLOANE.

sicians in London, Sloane found himself in his twenty-seventh year fully qualified for the exercise of his chosen profession. And at this juncture he was offered a position which was to be for him as educational as Darwin's experience on board the *Beagle*. His proficiency as a medical man became known to Christopher Monck, the second Duke of Albemarle, who, towards the close of 1687, was made governor-general of Jamaica. Needing a physician for his own retinue, the Duke offered the position to Sloane on his own conditions. Fired with the vision of new lands and opportunities for unusual botanical research, Sloane accepted the post, advising his friend Courten that he designed sending him "what is curious from the several islands we land at." He was absent from England nearly twenty months, and when he returned brought with him an amazing collection of dried plants and other curiosities of natural history. "My collection," he remarked, "of dried samples of some very strange plants excited the curiosity of people who loved things of that nature to see them, and who were welcome, until I observed some so very curious as to desire to carry part of them privately home, and injure what they left. This made me upon my guard."

Having laid for his museum such an admirable foundation, Sloane throughout the remainder of his long life spared no pains to add to its stores. Some

three years after his return from the West Indies the death of his friend Courten left him heir to the valuable collection of that connoisseur. It was such a collection, Evelyn said, "as I had never seen in all my travels abroad — either of private gentlemen, or of princes. It consisted," added the diarist, "of miniatures, drawings, shells, insects, medals, minerals; all being very perfect and rare of their kind; especially his books of birds, fishes, flowers, and shells, drawn and miniatured to the life." This was a notable addition to Sloane's treasures, and gave variety to his museum. And that he delved freely into his own purse at all times for desirable acquisitions is eloquently demonstrated by the fact that at the time of his death he possessed over three thousand volumes of manuscripts, some forty thousand printed books, and a countless array of medals, coins, precious stones, antiquities, and vegetable and anatomical specimens. But he was not a selfish collector. The letter book of Edward Harley testifies to that fact. Now Sloane writes to send Harley a catalogue of manuscripts which were to be sold in Paris; anon he informs his fellow connoisseur that he had had offered to him a rare Greek copy of the Evangelists, which he had declined to purchase on the ground that it was "properer" for Harley's library.

Although the life of Sloane has never been written there is no lack of material. His own manu-

scripts contain valuable data, and the diaries of the eighteenth century are rich in picturesque references to the famous physician. One page from such a diary will be read with interest, especially as it records a visit to Sloane while he was still living in Bloomsbury and almost within a stone's throw of that noble building where his treasures have found a permanent home. The extract is from the manuscript diary of Sir Erasmus Philipps, and is best given in its original spelling, abbreviation, and punctuation:

"June 1st, 1730. — Sir Richard Ellys, Sir Tho. Whored. Bartts., and their Ladies, Miss Ayer, my Father, Bro. Bulkeley, and self waited on Sir Hanse Sloane, Bart., President of the College of Physicians, and of the Royal Society, at his House in Gt. Russell Street, who showed us his Museum; dined wth him, and after dinner, finish'd showing. D^{r} Cromwell Mortimer lives wth him, and assisted — a Swiss also — M^{rs}. Stanley, S^{r} Hanse's eldest daughter, din'd wth us. About 30,000 vols, 3000 manuscripts, 500 Books of Prints, Albert Durer's, 5 vols. folio, invaluable; also Hans Holbein; vast No. of Curiosities in the Animal, Vegetable, and Mineral way; a Swedish owl, 2 Crain Birds, a dog; vast No. of Agats, an Owel in one, exact, orange; Tobacco in others, Lusus Naturæ; an opal here; Catalogue of Books, ab^{t} 40 volumes; 250 large Folios, Horti Sicci; Butterflies in Nos.; 23,000

Medals; Inscriptions, one exceeding fair from Caerleon; A fœtus cut out of a Woman's belly, thought she had the dropsy; lived afterwards, and had several Children; Fine Injections of the Brain by Rhuish of Amsterdam. Sir Hanse said at dinner, y^t^ there were three things he never had at his Table, viz. Salmon, Champagne, and Burgandy. Very friendly, and seemed to take delight in shewing his things. Must be 70 at least."

Eleven years later, when he had attained the ripe age of eighty-one, Sloane gave up his active life as a physician and retired to what were then the rural shades of Chelsea. He had been lord of the manor there for a quarter of a century, having purchased in 1714 the fine old mansion and its spacious garden. It was an ideal haven for a man of his tastes, and the house provided him with ample room for the proper display of his varied treasures. Here he spent the last twelve years of his life, and, thanks to the recording pen of Sylvanus Urban, there is in existence a pleasant picture of the venerable man and his famous collection. This narrative, which was published in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for July, 1748, relates the visit of the Prince and Princess of Wales, the parents of George III. It adds a certain piquancy to its perusal to remember that although Frederick Louis "affected to patronize the arts and literature, his tastes were not otherwise refined," and that Horace Walpole de-

clared the chief passion of the prince "was women; but, like the rest of his race, beauty was not a necessary ingredient." As with the quotation from Sir Erasmus Philipps's diary, the account is best given in its original form:

"Dr. Mortimer, secretary to the Royal Society, conducted their Royal Highnesses into the room where Sir Hans was sitting, being antient and infirm. The Prince took a chair and sat down by the good old gentleman some time, when he expressed the greatest esteem and value he had for him personally, and how much the learned world was obliged to him for his having collected such a vast library of curious books, and such immense treasures of the valuable and instructive productions of nature and art. Sir Hans's house forms a square of above 100 feet each side enclosing a court; and three front rooms had tables set along the middle, which were spread over with drawers fitted with all sorts of precious stones in their natural beds, or state as they are found in the earth, except the first, that contained stones formed in animals, which are so many diseases of the creature that bears them; as the most beautiful pearls, which are but warts in the shell fish; the bezoars, concretions in the stomach; and stones generated in the kidneys and bladder, of which man woefully knows the effects; but the earth in her bosom generates the verdant emerald, the purple amethist, the golden topaz, the azure

saphire, the crimson garnet, the scarlet ruby, the brilliant diamond, the glowing opal, and all the painted varieties that Flora herself might wish to be decked with; here the most magnificent vessels of cornelian, onyx, sardonyx and jasper, delighted the eye, and raised the mind to praise the great creator of all things.

"When their Royal Highnesses had viewed one room, and went into another, the scene was shifted, for, when they returned, the same tables were covered for a second course with all sorts of jewels, polished, and set after the modern fashion; or with gems carved or engraved; the stately and instructive remains of antiquity; for the third course the tables were spread with gold and silver ores, with the most precious and remarkable ornaments used in the habits of men, from Siberia to the Cape of Good Hope, from Japan to Peru; and with both ancient and modern coins and medals in gold and silver, the lasting monuments of historical facts; as those of Prusius, king of Bithynia, who betrayed his allies; of an Alexander, who mad with ambition, over-run and invaded his neighbours; of a Cæsar, who inslaved his country to satisfy his own pride; of a Titus, the delight of mankind; of a Pope Gregory XIII. recording on a silver medal his blind zeal for religion, in perpetuating thereon the massacre of the protestants in France; as did Charles IX. the then reigning king in that country;

here may be seen the coins of a king of England, crowned at Paris; a medal representing France and Spain, striving which should first pay their obeissance to Britannia; others showing the effect of popular rage, when overmuch oppressed by their superiors, as in the case of the De Witts in Holland; the happy deliverance of Britain, by the arrival of King William; the glorious exploits of a Duke of Marlborough, and the happy arrival of the present illustrious royal family amongst us.

"The gallery, 110 feet in length, presented a most surprising prospect; the most beautiful corals, crystals and figured stones; the most brilliant butterflies, and other insects, shells painted with as great variety as the precious stones, and feathers of birds vying with gems; here the remains of the Antediluvian world excited the awful idea of the great catastrophe, so many evident testimonies of the truth of Moses's history; the variety of animals shows us the great beauty of all parts of the creation.

"Then a noble vista presented itself through several rooms filled with books, among these many hundred volumes of dried plants; a room full of choice and valuable manuscripts; the noble present sent by the present French king to Sir Hans, of his collections of paintings, medals, statues, palaces, etc. in 25 large atlas volumes; besides other things too many to mention here.

"Below-stairs some rooms are filled with the curious and venerable antiquities of Egypt, Greece, Hetruria, Rome, Britain, and even America, others with large animals preserved in the skin; the great saloon lined on every side with bottles filled with spirits, containing various animals. The halls are adorned with the horns of divers creatures, as the double-horned Rhinoceros of Africa, the fossil deer's horns from Ireland nine feet wide; and with weapons of different countries, among which it appears that the Mayalese, and not our most Christian neighbours the French, had the honour of inventing that butcherly weapon the bayonet. Fifty volumes in folio would scarce suffice to contain a detail of this immense museum, consisting of above 200,000 articles.

"Their royal highnesses were not wanting in expressing their satisfaction and pleasure, at seeing a collection, which surpassed all the notions or ideas they had formed from even the most favourable accounts of it. The Prince on this occasion showed his great reading and most happy memory; for in such a multiplicity, such a variety of the productions of nature and art; upon anything being shown him he had not seen before, he was ready in recollecting where he had read of it; and upon viewing the ancient and modern medals, he made so many judicious remarks, that he appeared to be a perfect master of history and chronology; he

expressed the great pleasure it gave him to see so magnificent a collection in England, esteeming it an ornament to the nation; and expressed his sentiments how much it must conduce to the benefit of learning, and how great an honour will redound to Britain, to have it established for public use to the latest posterity."

When that narrative was published, Sir Hans Sloane had still nearly five years of life before him. But his thoughts were already busy with the final disposal of his museum, and a year after the royal visit he made a will bequeathing it to the British nation on the condition that the government paid his executors the sum of twenty thousand pounds, that not being, Sir Hans added, a fourth of the real and intrinsic value of his treasures. He died on the eleventh of January, 1753, and with his passing the founding of the British Museum was brought within measurable distance.

CHAPTER III

THE MUSEUM FOUNDED

But it is time to return to that fire which jeopardized the Cottonian library to such an alarming extent.

Without seeing in the conflagration "the Nemesis of Cotton's ghost" it is possible to recognize it as a providence in disguise, for the flames at Ashburnham House did sear the consciences of British legislators. The immediate result of the catastrophe was the appointment of a committee of the House of Commons charged with the duty of inquiring into the fire and with the further task of reporting upon the extent of the damage done.

From the documents laid upon the table of the House of Commons by that committee it is possible to gain a clear idea of what had happened. The fire, as Edward Harley's correspondents reported, was discovered about two o'clock on the morning of October 23rd, 1731. Not appreciating the extent to which the flames had taken hold of the building, the fire-fighters at first paid no attention to the precious manuscripts but busied themselves with throwing water on the burning timbers. But those efforts proved futile, and as the engines did not arrive "so

soon as could be wished," it at last dawned upon the excited custodians that their wisest policy was to save the manuscripts as far as possible. The deputy librarian had sufficient coolness to seize first upon the most valuable documents, such as the famous Alexandrian MS., but for the rest the salvage was attempted without bibliographical zeal. Some presses were broken open as they came handy, others were hauled out intact, while the books, "as many as could be, were thrown out of the windows."

Happily the fire-fighters were soon re-enforced by a capable captain. This was not Dr. Bentley, the librarian, who should have been foremost in the conflict, but who is said to have fled from the building immediately the fire was discovered; but Arthur Onslow, that incorrupt politician to whose credit stands the enviable record of having been Speaker of the House of Commons for thirty-three years. As soon as the fire was reported to him he hastened to the scene, took charge of the operations, and himself rendered yeoman's help in carrying the manuscripts and books to a place of safety. This was a labour of love to Arthur Onslow, for has he not recorded, in his inedited autobiography, how as a young man at Oxford he "got into a love of books and reading?"

Not content with his share in the salvage, Onslow at once called a meeting of his fellow trustees to take immediate counsel as to the best means of re-

pairing such of the manuscripts as had been damaged by the flames. At that gathering an elaborate scheme was resolved upon. The paper books were to be unbound, their leaves soaked in the "softest and clearest" water obtainable, then immersed in a solution of alum and water, and afterwards hung upon lines until they were dry enough to be rebound. The vellum manuscripts were to be carefully sorted into damaged and undamaged, and then the latter were to be further segregated according to whether their injury had been caused by fire or water, after which they were to be carefully and tenderly treated as their needs required. Even the fragments were to be "carefully cleaned and repaired." In fact, so far as the knowledge of the day went, Onslow and the other trustees did their utmost to mitigate the ravages of the flames.

All this was duly and generously acknowledged by the committee in their report to the House of Commons — a report which dealt faithfully with the dereliction of duty which the nation's officials had been guilty of in connection with the Cottonian library. "The public faith," they said, "is engaged for the better reception and preservation of the Cottonian Library."

Prior to their ordeal by fire, Sir Robert Cotton's books and manuscripts had passed through many tribulations. It has been shown in the previous chapter how the collection fell under suspicion in its

owner's lifetime, and was formally sealed up and placed under the guardianship of a court official. Later its shelves were ruthlessly searched for imaginary stolen property, and it remained under a ban for some years as though it were a hot-bed of treason. Then came the civil war, and as its owner in these unsettled days, Sir Thomas Cotton, was keenly alive to the suspicion with which his father's library was regarded, he took the precaution of removing the greater part of its contents to his son's country villa at Eyworth in Bedfordshire. During the temporary exile of the library Cotton House was placed at the disposal of the Parliamentary party, who allowed Charles I to sleep under its roof during his trial. When order was once more restored in the kingdom the books and manuscripts were returned to their home, but by 1706 Cotton House had become so dilapidated as to be no longer a fit repository for such treasures. In that year Sir Christopher Wren was deputed to examine the building and fit it for public use, but he had to report that it had fallen into utter decay. The apartment in which the library was kept was described as "a narrow, little room, damp, and improper for preserving the books and papers." All this was set forth in an Act of Parliament, but nothing was done. Six years later, however, Cotton House had become so ruinous that the library was transferred to Essex House in the Strand, which, for all its congenial as-

sociations with the poet Spenser, was "surrounded with buildings, and therefore in danger of fire." There, nevertheless, the books and manuscripts remained for eighteen years, until, in fact, 1730, when the government of the day became so far conscious of its duty to Cotton's invaluable legacy as to purchase Ashburnham House for its home. That building, situated in Little Dean's Yard, under the shadow of Westminster Abbey, had been designed by Inigo Jones for the family whose name it bore, but reverses of fortune compelled its sale. This house, as has been seen, nearly proved fatal to the Cottonian collection. It has also been recorded that when the fire occurred, Dr. Freind, the headmaster of Westminster School, offered the hospitality of his new dormitory to the charred and endangered volumes. The schoolhouse was but the other side of Little Dean's Yard, and there the books and manuscripts were to remain until, their wanderings and perils at an end, they found a secure haven in a suitable building.

That, however, was not until twenty-seven years later. And Heaven knows how much longer it would have been but for Sir Hans Sloane's death. His will was of such a nature that his executors and trustees felt it incumbent upon them to act quickly.

Hence, sixteen days after Sloane's death they met in council, and as a result of their deliberations agreed to present a memorial to the king urging

the acceptance of the terms on which Sir Hans had bequeathed his museum to the nation, that is, the payment of twenty thousand pounds to his executors. But here there was another hitch. It seemed as though the fates were conspiring against the birth of the British Museum. For, in the year 1753, the throne of England was occupied by George II. This was singularly unfortunate, for not only was George II indifferent to the claims of letters, but he had a rapacious spirit where money was concerned, save, perhaps, in connection with his mistresses. It was little wonder, then, that when the memorial was presented he dismissed it with the remark, "I don't think there are twenty thousand pounds in the treasury."

Such may have been the case, but that fact did not daunt Arthur Onslow. That single-hearted politician now took the matter in hand, prompted thereto, no doubt, by his lively recollection of his efforts to save the Cottonian manuscripts from the flames. For it should be noted that by this time the idea for a British Museum had taken more or less definite form; Sloane's bequest was an important addition to the Cottonian Library and afforded a reason why an effort should be made to house the two collections in one suitable building. Besides, there were the invaluable Harleian manuscripts — might not they also be saved from dispersion and added to the national stores? So a discussion in the House

of Commons was arranged for, and out of that discussion arose that proposal which the Countess of Oxford referred to the Duke and Duchess of Portland with such good results. To facilitate the adoption of the scheme, Onslow proposed the authorization by Parliament of a public lottery for a sum of money sufficient to provide enticing prizes and leave a balance ample for all the purposes in view.

For result is not the statute-book of England engrossed with that piece of legislation occultly described as "26 Geo. 2, c. 22?" The preamble explains it to be "an Act for the Purchase of the Museum or Collection of Sir Hans Sloane and of the Harleian Collection of Manuscripts, and for providing one general repository for the better reception and more convenient use of the said Collections, and of the Cottonian Library, and of the additions thereto." The Act comprised forty-nine sections, one of which authorized the holding of a lottery to raise three hundred thousand pounds, out of which thirty thousand pounds were to be paid to the executors of Sloane and the Countess of Oxford, while another thirty thousand pounds were to be invested at interest in the public funds for the payment of salaries and other expenses. In addition a sufficient sum was to be devoted to the building or acquisition of a suitable home for the collections. The passing of this Act in 1753 definitely marked the foundation of the British Museum.

MONTAGU HOUSE.

But how about that "general repository?" That was the next question to exercise the trustees who were appointed to carry out the Act. The manor house of Sir Hans Sloane at Chelsea was wisely ruled out of court as too remote from the centre of eighteenth-century London. Far more conveniently situated was Buckingham House, that spacious mansion of the Duke of Buckinghamshire, which occupied the site now burdened by Buckingham Palace. In 1753 it belonged to a natural son of the Duke, who, however, was anxious to convert it into hard cash. But as he wanted thirty thousand pounds for the structure, the trustees decided to look elsewhere. And they found what they wanted in Montagu House, Bloomsbury, which, with its seven acres of ground, fronted on that Great Russell Street where Sir Hans Sloane had his home in 1730.

As its name would suggest, Montagu House was built by Ralph Montagu, that "arrant a knave as any in his time" who spent what time he had left from his amours in any plot which promised his own advancement. The first mansion to which he gave his own name was built in 1678, and when Evelyn visited it the following year he found it "somewhat after the French." That is not surprising; Ralph Montagu was fond of French fashions. In that very year he was acting as ambassador for Charles II at Paris, and was giving the gossips

material for their letters. "There are terrible doings at Paris between my Lady Cleveland and her daughter Sussex," wrote one of those news vendors. "As I am a friend to the family, till the story be more complete I will not venture at sending you the whole relation, but whilst the mother was in England the daughter was debauched by our ambassador, Mr. Montagu, who has lived with her in the most open scandal to the wonder of the French court and the high displeasure of this."

However, the first Montagu House was not destined to harbour such serious guests as the Cottonian, Harley, and Sloane collections. It was burnt six years later. Then was built that successor which was offered to the trustees of the British Museum for ten thousand, two hundred and fifty pounds. That offer was accepted, but nearly six years were to elapse ere the building was thrown open to the public, for many alterations were deemed necessary, and these appear to have been carried out in that leisurely manner which characterized all the birth throes of the British Museum.

Not, then, until 15th of January, 1759, did that institution enter upon its beneficient career. The event made no stir in the news of the day. Here, in evidence thereof, is the page of the monthly chronicle in the *Annual Register* for that year, wherein the recorder of that day set down the most important happenings. Under the fifteenth of January

two items are reported, one telling how two English officers had gone to Ostend to arrange a general exchange of French and English prisoners; the other recording the arrest of six Sussex pirates who had been plundering a Danish ship. But not a sentence about the opening of the British Museum!

When the colloquialism "thrown open to the public" was used a few sentences back it was with a large mental reservation. "Thrown open" is far too generous a term to apply to the regulations under which visitors were first admitted to the British Museum. To-day the building is open throughout the year save on Good Friday and Christmas day; even on Sunday afternoons visitors are welcomed; and, save for the special students' rooms, every nook and corner of the vast treasure-house may be freely explored. If a student of books or newspapers, or of manuscripts, or of prints and drawings, etc., wishes admission to either of the special rooms set aside in connection with those departments, he has but to apply to the Director's office and be at once armed with a temporary order. Should he wish to pursue his studies for weeks and months instead of days, an application accompanied by a suitable reference will speedily elicit a six months' ticket of admission "with the Director's compliments." Difficult, indeed, would it be to name a public institution where the highest officials to the

lowest are more unfailing in courtesy and helpfulness.

Two or three sentences, then, would suffice to define the conditions under which visitors and students are admitted to the museum to-day, but a century and a half ago it needed a small pamphlet to contain the regulations thought necessary by the trustees. At the outset it demanded something like a mathematical calculation to determine when the building was and was not open. There were so many exceptions. For example, "except Saturday and Sunday in each week;" likewise "except Christmas day and one week after;" also except the week after Easter Sunday and the week after Whit-Sunday; and except Good Friday, *and* "all days, which are now, or shall hereafter be specially appointed for Thanksgivings or fasts by public authority." Having mastered these exceptions, the next mnemonic lesson was to remember that "between the months of September and April inclusive, from Monday to Friday inclusive, the museum be opened, from nine o'clock in the morning till three in the afternoon; and likewise at the same hours on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday, in May, June, July, and August; but on Monday and Friday, only from four o'clock to eight in the afternoon, during those four months, except at the times above stated."

Having eliminated all the exceptions, and gained some sort of an idea at what hour the museum was

open when it was open, the prospective visitor had not by any means reached the end of his troubles. Far from it. There was the question of getting in. At the entrance was a lodge, in the lodge was a porter, by the porter's side was a formidable volume known as the register, and until the persevering applicant had given his name, condition, and address to the porter; and until that official had entered those particulars in the aforesaid register; and until that volume had been duly laid before the librarian or his understudy; and until that librarian or his next in command had decided the weighty problem as to whether the person applying was "proper" to be admitted; and until — the solution being in the affirmative — either of those officials issued a ticket for admission, the prospective visitor had no more chance of getting inside the museum than Satan has of eluding the vigilance of St. Peter at the gates of Heaven.

It will be gathered from the foregoing that the inquiring person who contemplated the pleasure of inspecting the treasures in Montagu House had to make two visits to secure his ticket. Such was the case. Hence it was on a third journey only that he was able to gain admission. Even then he might have to wait several hours for his turn. This was owing to the fact that no more than ten tickets could be used for each hour the museum was open, for the visitors were escorted round in little parties of that

number, and consequently it might easily happen that even on his third call the visitor would have to go away with his object unaccomplished.

Granting, however, that he was fortunate enough to get into one of the groups of ten, what was his experience? At that time the museum consisted of three departments — that is, manuscripts and medals, natural and artificial productions, and printed books — and just so many hours and no more were allowed for the inspection of the whole. And the various objects were shown in a manner which implied that each of the visitors was a possible thief. For example: "if any of the spectators desire to see any book, or other part of the collection, it be handed to them by the officer, as far as is consistent with the security of the collection, to be judged of by the said officer; who is to restore it to its place, before they leave the room." And again: "That the coins and medals, except such as the standing committee shall order, from time to time, to be placed in glass cases, be not exposed to view, but by leave of the trustees, in a general meeting, or of the principal librarian; that they be shown between the hours of one and three in the afternoon, by one of the officers, who have the custody of them; that no more than two persons be admitted into the room to see them at the same time, unless by particular leave of the principal librarian." But it would be tedious to merely recite all the infinite de-

tail of restrictions which hedged the visitor round at every step; sufficient has been cited to show how superficial must have been his acquaintance with the treasures he had taken so much pains to see. And it should be noted that at this time " no children " were admitted to the museum under any consideration.

For over forty years the Draconian regulations outlined above were kept in force with but slight modification. The results may be imagined. In 1776 those who had applied for tickets in April were still waiting for them in August! Six years later it was possible to obtain a ticket in about a fortnight, but even then, as a visitor sadly noted, " it was the room, the glass-cases, the shelves, which I saw; not the museum itself, so rapidly were we hurried on through the departments." And the ticket speculator of those days reaped a rich harvest, doing a thriving trade in selling to country visitors that card of admission which their short stay in the capital prevented them securing for themselves. One such visitor from the country has left us a picture of his gallop through the museum. " We began to move pretty fast, when I asked with some surprise whether there were none to inform us what the curiosities were as we went along. A tall genteel young man in person, who seemed to be our conductor, replied with some warmth: ' What! would you have me tell you everything in the museum? How

is it possible? Besides, are not the names written upon many of them?' I was too much humbled by this reply to utter another word. The company seemed influenced; they made haste, and were silent. No voice was heard but in whispers. When our leader opens the door of another apartment, the silent language of that action is, 'Come along.' . . . In about thirty minutes we finished our silent journey through this princely mansion, which would well have taken thirty days. I went out much about as wise as I went in, but with this severe reflection that, for fear of losing my chance, I had that morning abruptly torn myself from three gentlemen with whom I was engaged in an interesting conversation, had lost my breakfast, got wet to the skin, spent half-a-crown in coach hire, paid two shillings for a ticket, and been hackneyed through the rooms with violence."

Not until 1805 was the ticket speculator eliminated, and three more years were to elapse ere admission cards were finally abolished.

But the adoption of a more liberal policy was a slow process. In 1835 the public were admitted to the museum on but three days of the week, Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, Tuesday and Thursday being reserved for "artists," and Saturday always kept sacred as the "general cleansing day." When, during the Parliamentary inquiry which was held in 1835, a tentative suggestion was made that a part of

Saturday might suffice for cleansing, the officials scouted the idea as impracticable. And they resisted just as strenuously the proposal that the policy of closing the museum for one month in the year should be abandoned, blandly oblivious to the fact that the argument adduced — that it was necessary for " cleaning, whitewashing, and re-arranging " — had been previously used in favour of keeping the building shut for two months. The apologists of the officials contend that all these objections were the result of too small a staff and an inadequate grant from the national treasury for working expenses.

Certainly it cannot be denied that for many years the grants for the British Museum were either small or grudgingly given. When the annual estimates were under discussion in the House of Commons in 1833, William Cobbett gave a typical example of his persistent pugnacity in opposing the proposed grant of sixteen thousand pounds for the upkeep of the institution. Of what use in the wide world, he asked, was that British Museum; to whom, and to what class of persons was it useful? " Let those who lounged in it and made it a place of amusement, contribute to its support. Why should tradesmen and farmers be called upon to pay for the support of a place which was intended only for the amusement of the curious and the rich, and not for the benefit or for the instruction of the poor? If the aristocracy

wanted the Museum as a lounging place, let them pay for it. For his own part, he did not know where this British Museum was, nor did he know much of the contents of it; but from the little he had heard of it, even if he knew where it was, he would not take the trouble of going to see it." And so forth.

Seven years before that diatribe, however, there were visible signs in stones and mortar that the nation's representatives were beginning to adopt a more generous policy in connection with the institution. In October, 1826, the *Annual Register* reported that "the building, lately erected in the garden of the British Museum, for the reception of the library presented by his Majesty, is nearly in a finished state." The building referred to is that part of the present structure known as the King's Library, the long and handsome gallery which runs almost the entire length of the east side of the museum. The erection of that gallery inaugurated the building of the museum in its present form. By 1823 the collections had increased so enormously that Montagu House became far too straitened for their accommodation, and the acquisition of George III's eighty-four thousand volumes made the provision of more room an imperative necessity. And the growing need for more and still more space was satisfied year by year until the last trace of Montagu House disappeared and the present quadrangular building completed in 1847. Since that date

the chief additions to the structure have been the famous circular Reading-Room, completed in 1857, and the White Wing on the east, erected in 1884.

Imposing as is the principal façade of the museum, with its numerous Ionic columns and its pediment with sculptures by Westmacott, representing the progress of the human race, the most notable architectural feature of the building is that spacious circular Reading-Room with its monster dome two feet larger than that of St. Peter's at Rome. What a contrast that noble apartment is compared with the tiny basement room in Montagu House which was in 1759 thought ample for the needs of literary students! In that original Reading-Room there was but one simple, baize-covered table, and the chairs were but twenty in number. Even so, however, the accommodation was equal to the demand. Writing six months after the museum was opened, the poet Gray informed his friend Mason,

"I am just settled in my new habitation in Southampton Row, and, though a solitary and dispirited creature, not unquiet nor wholly unpleasant to myself. The museum will be my chief amusement. I this day passed through the jaws of a great leviathan that lay in my way into the den of Dr. Templeman, superintendent of the Reading-Room, who congratulated himself on the sight of so much good company. We were — a man that writes for Lord Royston; a man that writes for Dr. Barton of

York; a third that writes for the Emperor of Germany or Dr. Peacock, for he speaks the worst English I ever heard; Dr. Stukely, who writes for himself, the very worst person he could write for; and I, who only read to know if there were anything worth writing, and that not without some difficulty."

Six in all, including the official! No wonder the trustees thought one table and twenty chairs ample accommodation. If it be answered that those were early days, the rejoinder is supplied in Disraeli's reference to the experience of his parent: "When my father first frequented the reading-room of the British Museum at the end of the last century, his companions never numbered half a dozen." So late as 1805 that was about the average. By that date, however, the readers had long been provided with an upstair room in Montagu House, which continued in use until 1817. By that time their numbers had increased so considerably that another and larger apartment was set aside, and five years later it became necessary to increase the accommodation once more. But the problem of finding room for the ever-growing army of book students was not to be solved by makeshifts.

What had happened since the almost solitary vigils of Gray and Isaac Disraeli was that the modern passion for book-making had set in and was taking possession of an ever increasing army. It

BRITISH MUSEUM IN COURSE OF ERECTION BEHIND MONTAGU HOUSE.

was in those changing times that Washington Irving sauntered one day into the museum, and, having tired of the Egyptian mummies and other curiosities, found his attention attracted to a distant door.

"It was closed, but every now and then it would open, and some strangely favoured being, generally clothed in black, would steal forth, and glide through the rooms, without noticing any of the surrounding objects. There was an air of mystery about this that piqued my languid curiosity, and I determined to attempt the passage of that strait, and to explore the unknown regions beyond. The door yielded to my hand, with that facility with which the portals of enchanted castles yield to the adventurous knight-errant. I found myself in a spacious chamber, surrounded with great cases of venerable books. Above the cases, and just under the cornice, were arranged a great number of black-looking portraits of ancient authors. About the room were placed long tables, with stands for reading and writing, at which sat many pale, studious personages, poring intently over dusty volumes, rummaging among mouldy manuscripts, and taking copious notes of their contents. A hushed stillness reigned throughout this mysterious apartment, excepting that you might hear the racing of pens over sheets of paper, or occasionally the deep sigh of one of these sages, as he shifted his position to turn

over the page of an old folio; doubtless arising from that hollowness and flatulency incident to learned research.

"Now and then one of these personages would write something on a small slip of paper, and ring a bell, whereupon a familiar would appear, take the paper in profound silence, glide out of the room, and return shortly loaded with ponderous tomes, upon which the other would fall tooth and nail with famished voracity. I had no longer a doubt that I had happened upon a body of magi, deeply engaged in the study of occult sciences. . ... My curiosity being now fully aroused, I whispered to one of the familiars, as he was about to leave the room, and begged an interpretation of the strange scene before me. A few words were sufficient for the purpose. I found that these mysterious personages, whom I had mistaken for magi, were principally authors, and in the very act of manufacturing books. I was, in fact, in the reading-room of the great British Library."

As has been noted, how to provide for that ever-growing tribe of book manufacturers became a serious problem. The trustees discussed it for years, and seemed at the end as far as ever from the solution, inasmuch as all the plans suggested were based upon the purchase of more land than already belonged to the museum. Then someone had a happy idea. Exactly who the someone was is a matter

still as undecided as the identity of Junius. Like Columbus with the egg, the plan to-day looks childishly simple. The museum buildings are in the form of a quadrangle, and at the time when more library space was an urgent necessity the inner area of the structure was wholly unoccupied, save by a sickly-looking grass lawn which the children of one of the officials used as a playground. The credit of the "happy thought" of utilizing this waste space is claimed for three men, but it would seem that the first to place the suggestion on record was Thomas Watt, who, as early as 1837, wrote: "The space, thus unfortunately wasted, would have provided accommodation for the whole Library." Whether Anthony Panizzi was acquainted with that remark seems improbable, but even Mr. Watt declared that, whoever suggested the proposition, "it was only such a man as Panizzi who could have got the project carried out." It was a difficult task, for government sanction and treasury support were but slowly obtained. However, the day was finally won, and the building begun in 1854. Three years later the splendid apartment was finished to its last item at a total cost of about one hundred and fifty thousand pounds.

Naturally the distinctly literary associations of the British Museum cluster most thickly around those apartments which have been more intimately connected with the department of printed books.

Although the old rooms have vanished, that where Gray found himself in such a select company, and the other to which Washington Irving penetrated in so clandestine a manner, the present spacious apartment has in its more than half-century of history gathered associations which to a distant age will vie with those of the past.

Since the great Reading-Room was completed the only notable addition to the structure of the British Museum has been the erection, in 1884 as already stated, of that White Wing which owes its existence to William White's generous bequest. But the museum has gained in space in another way. Between 1880 and 1883 the natural history collections were removed from the Bloomsbury institution to the Natural History Museum at South Kensington, such a separation having become necessary not only by consideration of space but by the immense growth of scientific knowledge. Hence those who are anxious to inspect the "embrios and cockleshells," "sharks with one ear, and spiders as big as geese," which Horace Walpole was given the co-guardianship of, must seek them elsewhere than under the roof of the successor of Montagu House.

CHAPTER IV

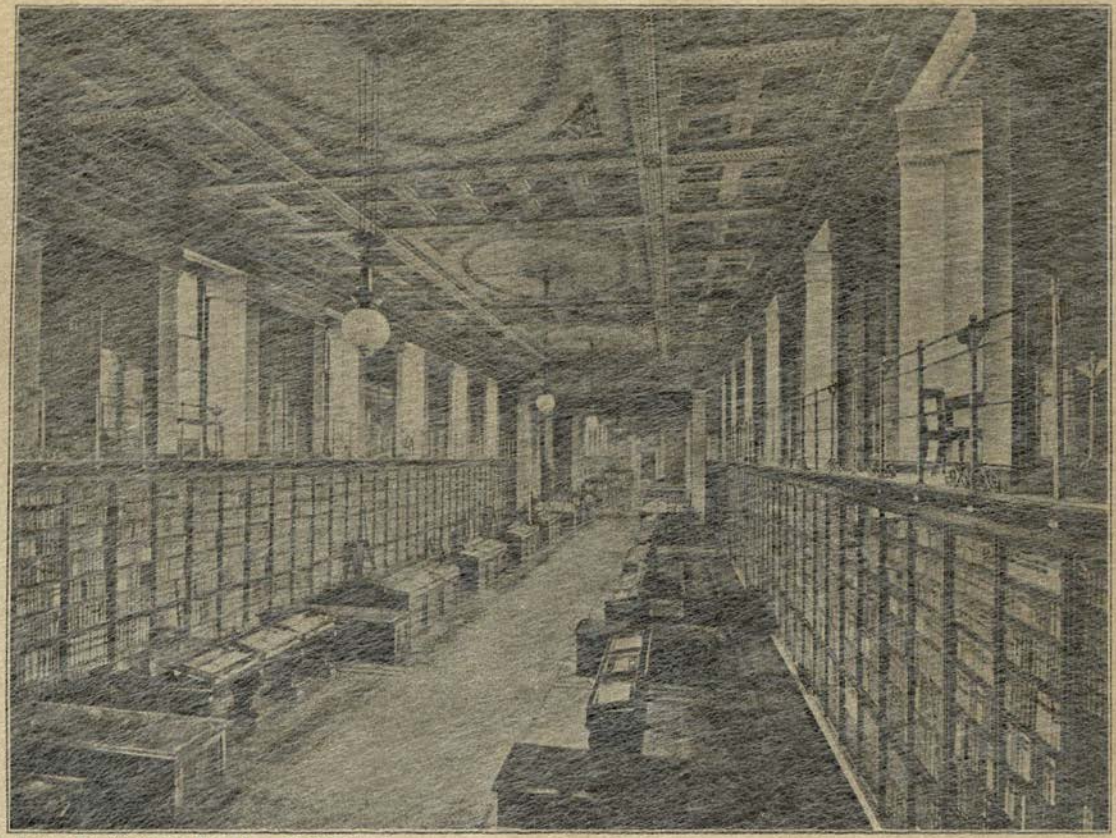
LANDMARKS IN GROWTH

Between the passing of that Act of Parliament which was the foundation charter of the British Museum and the actual opening of Montagu House, the three collections which were the immediate occasion of the act were augmented by a fourth of considerable value. This was the first of the two royal libraries which form part of the literary treasures of the institution, and consisted of the books which had been collected by the kings of England from the time of Henry VII. The foundation of that library dates back, then, to the fifteenth century, and it is eminently appropriate that it should have owed its beginnings to "the Solomon of England," who was as interested in the achievements of Caxton as in the explorations of the Cabots.

At the opening of the seventeenth century, however, the royal library was hardly of an importance commensurate with the position and resources of its owner. Actual statistics and particulars are lacking; all that is probable is that the collection was little more than a respectable nucleus when it became an object of interest to Henry, Prince of Wales, that first-born son of James I whose early

death was the occasion of so many high-pitched elegies and lamentations. The contemporary appreciations of his character are so overlaid with seventeenth-century extravagance — "in a word," wrote one eulogist, "he was the most fair fruit of his progenitors, an excellent ornament of the present age, a true mirror to posterity," — that it is somewhat difficult to divine what his actual promise was, but that he had some love of learning is a probable inference from his act in purchasing, in 1609, the goodly library of Lord Lumley and adding it to the stores of his royal ancestors. For a youth of fifteen, even though he were a prince and heir to the English throne, Lord Lumley's books were an enviable possession. They included the valuable volumes of his father-in-law, Lord Arundel, which, in turn, comprised many of the works formerly in the collection of Archbishop Cranmer.

Between the death of Prince Henry and the gift of the royal library to the British Museum by George II there elapsed a period of nearly a century and a half, during which time it was both augmented and depleted. That it escaped entire destruction during the civil war of the seventeenth century seems almost a miracle in view of what happened to Westminster Abbey and the iconoclastic zeal of the Puritans. Before those turbulent days its treasures had been enriched by the famous



From Photograph by Donald Macbeth.

BRITISH MUSEUM: KING'S LIBRARY.

Codex Alexandrinus, one of the most invaluable manuscripts of the Bible in existence, the gift of the Patriarch of Constantinople to Charles I; and even in the reign of Charles II many important additions were made. All told, when the library joined the congenial companionship of the Cottonian, Harleian, and Sloane collections in Montagu House it comprised some twelve thousand volumes, and was a worthy addition to the nation's stores of learning. George II probably parted with the library without regret; he had no appreciation of either "boetry or bainting," and probably felt something was due from him for having poohpoohed the purchase of the Sloane Museum.

Five years later the museum was favoured with another royal gift, and this time a gift which, in contrast with that of George II, cost the donor some personal expense. And it was a gift which, many years later, was to earn from Thomas Carlyle as high praise as he ever indulged. Being called to give evidence in connection with the Parliamentary inquiry into the condition of the museum, and asked whether he had found the library well equipped in materials for English history, Carlyle signaled out the Thomason collection of tracts for unstinted eulogy. "They are called," he said, "the King's Pamphlets; and in value, I believe, the whole world could not parallel them. If you were to take all the collections of works on the civil war, of which

I have ever heard notice, I believe you would not get a set of works so valuable as those."

How that tribute would have warmed the heart of the unremitting George Thomason! And he would have rejoiced unfeignedly to hear his collection called "the King's Pamphlets," for he is credited with having made it "only for his Majesty's use that then was." It seems Thomason, who was a London bookseller, first conceived the idea of his collection about 1641, and that the object he set before him was to secure a copy of every pamphlet or leaflet published by Royalists or Parliamentarians in connection with the strife between king and Commons. Nay, he went further, and secured nearly a hundred manuscripts "which no man durst then venture to publish here without endangering his ruin." For some twenty years he continued his task with unflagging zeal, heartened by the fact that on one occasion Charles I himself, in need of a certain pamphlet and unable to find it elsewhere, was able to gratify his curiosity from his collection.

At the end of his labours Thomason found himself in possession of nearly thirty thousand tracts, and when bound in a uniform style they constituted a unique library of some two thousand volumes. But hardly has any library ever caused its owner so much anxiety. Because it contained all the pamphlets written in favour of the royal cause, the col-

lection was anathema to the Parliamentary party, and many were the devices Thomason resorted to to save it from their clutches. Once it was sent into the country in Surrey, then into Essex, and anon serious thought was taken of dispatching it to Holland for "more safe preservation." Then the precious volumes were hidden away in tables with false tops, and so were preserved until quieter days returned. After other tribulations of a less dangerous character the collection was purchased in 1762 by George III for three hundred pounds and immediately handed over to the British Museum. Of course that sum does not represent a tithe of its value; Thomason himself refused an offer of four thousand pounds as insufficient to pay his out-of-pocket expenses.

Among the lesser but still valuable donations by which the printed and manuscript treasures of the museum were enhanced in its early years record should be made of the library of Hebrew books and manuscripts bequeathed by Solomon da Costa, an Amsterdam Jew, as a "thanksgiving, in part, for the generous protection and numberless blessings" he had enjoyed in his adopted land; the library of Dr. Thomas Birch, notable for its wealth of biography; David Garrick's collection of English plays which Charles Lamb laid under contribution to such excellent purpose in his "Specimens of English Dramatic Poets;" and the two thousand volumes,

largely of biography, gifted by Sir William Musgrave. The latter also left the museum his extensive and interesting collection of manuscripts bearing upon the history of portrait-painting in England.

Ere the eighteenth century ended, another landmark in the growth of the museum was raised by the generous bequest of Clayton M. Cracherode, a man of considerable means whose one enjoyment in life had been the collecting of rare books, drawings, prints, coins, and gems. He was of a singularly retiring disposition; had taken holy orders but evidently found the conspicuousness of a pulpit too trying; lived, it is said, in constant dread of having to discharge a court function on the performance of which he held his manor from the Crown; was never on horseback or never travelled further from London than Oxford; and restricted his daily exercise to visits to a couple of celebrated book shops. How such a recluse was ever induced to become a trustee of the British Museum is not explained, but his services were secured, and, when his will was read in April, 1799, it disclosed that he had left all his treasures to that institution. They comprised some four thousand five hundred volumes, each of high value for one reason or another; seven portfolios of choice drawings; a hundred portfolios of rare prints after Rembrandt, Durer, and other great artists; and a richly-equipped cab-

inet of coins and cameos. Cracherode's prints were so tempting that Robert Dighton, the etcher, was unable to resist their appeal, with the result that he stole a number from the portfolios and sold them for considerable sums. This was the theft which led to the dismissal of Rev. William Beloe, an early keeper of the printed books, whose good graces Dighton had been careful to cultivate.

All the additions noted above were, it will have been observed, free gifts to the national storehouse; they had not cost the trustees or the government a penny piece. Up to the beginning of the nineteenth century, indeed, the national purse had not contributed a single cent towards enriching the literary treasures of the British Museum. But the year 1807 marked the inauguration of a more generous policy; it witnessed the grant of nearly five thousand pounds for the purchase of the Lansdowne manuscripts. As was the case with the first of the Harleys, the collector of those manuscripts — Lord Shelburne, afterwards created the first Marquis of Lansdowne — had a somewhat chequered career as a statesman, "one of the most unpopular" of his time, and was the model of whom Gainsborough, flinging down his pencil after a second attempt at a likeness, declared, "D— it! I never could see through varnish, and there's an end." It was after an early reverse in his political career that Shelburne retired to his country seat and found recrea-

tion in remodelling his estate and collecting manuscripts. From time to time he was able to acquire the collections of Sir Julius Cæsar, the Burghley Papers, the manuscripts of Bishop Kennet and James West, and other valuable documents. They included all kinds of political papers, and extensive material relating to many periods of English history. In its final form, then, the Lansdowne collection became a worthy rival to its Cottonian and Harleian predecessors.

Having set a precedent in the spending of public funds for the increase of the library, Parliament repeated the experiment in 1813, when eight thousand pounds were voted for the purchase of Francis Hargrave's library, which was largely of a legal character. Wholly different was the classical library of Dr. Charles Burney, for which the next Parliamentary grant was made. This was eight years later, and the sum involved was thirteen thousand five hundred pounds. Even so, however, the nation received good value for its money, for it has been estimated that at public auction the books would have realized fully twenty thousand pounds. In actual figures the printed books totalled upwards of thirteen thousand, and the manuscripts over five hundred, but the latter included some unique examples of Greek transcripts on vellum, and the former were particularly rich classical texts.

Notable as were the gifts and purchases which

have been briefly described above, they were wholly eclipsed by the acquisition of the second royal library in 1823. This was the collection which, as was indicated in the previous chapter, necessitated the erection of a new building and inaugurated the entire reconstruction of the museum.

When George III became king of England he found himself without a library. The reason will be fresh in the memory of the reader of the foregoing pages; his grandfather, George II, had presented to the nation the only collection of books which answered that purpose. So the third of the Georges had to begin all over again, and he set about the task in good earnest. Not only was he happy in the choice of his librarian, Frederick A. Barnard, but that librarian in turn was fortunate in having Dr. Johnson as an adviser. When Barnard was on the eve of leaving England for the Continent in search of acquisitions for the king's library, Johnson addressed him in a lengthy letter full of wise counsel and practical suggestions, otherwise "most masterly instructions" as Boswell phrased it. That, however, was more than a year subsequent to Johnson's famous interview with George III, in the library, which contained even then books "more numerous and curious than he supposed any person could have gathered in the time which the king had employed." That the monarch took a keen pride in his collection is obvious from the

indirect way in which he angled for Johnson's compliments. The king asked, Boswell records, "whether there were better libraries at Oxford or Cambridge. He answered he believed the Bodleian was larger than any they had at Cambridge; at the same time adding, 'I hope, whether we have more books or not than they have at Cambridge, we shall make as good use of them as they do.' Being asked whether All Souls or Christ Church library was the largest, he answered, 'All Souls library is the largest we have except the Bodleian.' 'Ay,' said the king, 'that is the public library.'" Even that obvious opening for some eulogium of the library in which the conversation took place was missed by Johnson, so the talk drifted into other channels.

By the date of Johnson's interview with George III the royal library was housed in Buckingham Palace and there continued through the remainder of that king's reign. Barnard missed no opportunity to add to its shelves, and from year to year its treasures were augmented by Joseph Smith's choice volumes, by the rich harvest gathered during the librarian's tour on the Continent, by numerous Caxtons, and by countless desirable works in general literature. For result, at the time of the king's death in 1820 the royal library contained all told some eighty-four thousand volumes.

But such a repository of knowledge did not ap-

peal to George IV. And there were two serious objections against harbouring the collection, the first being that it occupied considerable space, and the second that its upkeep demanded an annual expenditure of more than two thousand pounds from the royal purse. In view of the new king's character, then, it is hardly surprising that he concluded to sell the library which his father had so carefully gathered at great cost. Not surprising, but at the same time wholly reprehensible, and hardly in keeping with what "the first gentleman of Europe" should have contemplated. However, there the library was, an incumbrance and an expense, and, on the other hand, the Emperor of Russia was known to covet and would undoubtedly give a goodly sum for its possession. But just as George IV was on the eve of concluding his disreputable transaction he was sharply reminded that a king had other obligations than the enrichment of his own coffers. News was carried to Lord Sidmouth that the books were consigned for the Baltic, with the protest that it would be "a shame that such a collection should go out of the country." "It shall not," he rejoined. Nor did it. Reproved by his ministers, George IV retorted, "Well, if I can't have the roubles, you must find me their value in pounds sterling." Which had to be done in an underhand way, and when the "selfish dog," as Grenville called him, was sure of his

money, he sat down in his gaudy Pavilion at Brighton to write that hypocritical letter in which he expressed his "satisfaction" in being able to "present" the library to the nation! That pious fiction is yet perpetuated in the museum in Latin and English in the inscriptions in those languages which set forth how the library was "given to the British nation by his most gracious Majesty George IV." The foregoing statement will enable the reader of those lines to make the necessary deductions, and at the same time enable him to appreciate how large a debt of gratitude is due to George III.

If George IV proved himself a "selfish dog" in relation to his father's library, no such charge can be brought against the eccentric Francis Henry Egerton, whose name is assured of fame in the annals of the British Museum by his bequest of the Egerton Manuscripts and a sum of twelve thousand pounds, the interest of which was to be devoted to increasing the collection and paying the salary of its custodian. As the last Earl of Bridgewater, to which title he succeeded six years before his death in 1829, he will also be long remembered by those Bridgewater Treatises, for the writing of which he bequeathed a further sum of eight thousand pounds.

Francis Egerton was as strange a character as is to be found on the lengthy annals of donors to

the museum. Appointed by his father prebendary of Durham, he also accepted two other ecclesiastical preferments and retained them until his death, but discharged their duties by proxy. His threefold connection with the church did not prevent him from succumbing to temptations of the flesh, for among the engraved plates of members of his family which he had prepared one bore the inscription, "Sophia Egerton, natural daughter of Francis Henry Egerton." That deviation from the paths of virtue happened during his long residence in Paris, where he eventually died. His house in the French capital is said to have been "filled with cats and dogs, some of which were dressed up as men and women, and were driven out in his carriage, and fed at his table." Most of the manuscripts he collected bore upon Continental history and included numerous original letters of the sovereigns and statesmen of France and autographs of famous Italians. In accordance with the terms of the donor's will, the manuscripts are still kept as a distinct collection, and the chief keeper of manuscripts conjoins the office of "Egerton Librarian."

Three years after the acquisition of the Egerton manuscripts in 1829 the autograph treasures of the museum were further increased by the Arundel manuscripts, which had been collected in the first half of the seventeenth century by Thomas Howard,

Earl of Arundel, who seems to have been first inoculated with a love of antiquities in 1609, when he went to the Continent in search of health. This was that member of the Howard family whom Horace Walpole characterized as "the father of vertu in England" and who gathered the famous Arundel marbles. In his "good Mr. Petty" he had an agent as zealous as the invaluable Wanley, and the efforts of that worthy dependent were ably seconded by several other representatives. But it was the Earl himself who secured the Pirckheimer library, the rich classical treasures of which are perhaps the most important section of the Arundel manuscripts.

One other important landmark in the growth of the literary treasures of the museum remains to be noted — the bequest by the Right Hon. Thomas Grenville of that noble library which is rightly preserved as a distinct entity under his name. In the entire museum there are but seven apartments which perpetuate the names of donors, and none is so worthy of that chary honour as Thomas Grenville, for in money value alone his gift ranks as the most princely. A member of a family illustrious in the political annals of England, and with numerous and influential connections, it seemed, during his early years, as though he were destined to achieve high distinction in the councils of his nation, but soon after his fiftieth birthday he withdrew from

public life and devoted himself to the more congenial task of building up his library. But his love of books was not a late acquirement. As he delighted to relate in his old age, when still a youthful officer in the Coldstream Guards he, at an auction, bid against a whole bench of bishops for a rare edition of the Bible. By the year of his death he had collected upwards of twenty thousand volumes, conspicuous among which were unique editions of Homer and Æsop, and numerous and equally valuable works of travel, Irish history, English poetry, Greek and Latin classics, and old Italian and Spanish literature. There can be little doubt that Grenville's friendship for Anthony Panizzi accounted largely for the presentation of this valuable collection to the museum. When he mooted his intention to that official Grenville asked "Where are you going to put my books? I see your rooms are already full." In answer Panizzi took his friend to the gallery at right angles to the King's Library, and said, "If we can't do better, we'll put them here; and, as you see, my room is close by. Here, for a time, they will at least be under my own eye." And there they were placed in 1847, an enviable monument to their generous donor.

As the reader will no doubt have noticed, all the foregoing gifts or purchases were accessions to the purely literary treasures of the museum, increasing merely the departments of manuscripts and printed

books. There was a third department, it will be remembered, that of "natural and artificial productions," and it must not be supposed that no additions were made to its treasures. On the contrary, the public purse was opened for the enrichment of that section a quarter of a century before the other two departments partook of national generosity. When one looks over the old volumes of the *Annual Register* and notes the space given year by year to papers on natural history and antiquities, and when it is further remembered that the last half of the eighteenth century was remarkable for the interest taken in all kinds of curios, it is not surprising that the honourable members of the House of Commons were quite willing to vote public funds for the acquisition of such objects.

Hence this official record made in March, 1772: "The Commons agreed to the following grants: that £8410 be granted to his majesty, for purchasing antiquities brought from Italy, for the use of the public, to be vested in the trustees of the British Museum. That £840 be granted to the trustees of the British Museum, for providing a proper repository for the said collection."

Behind that businesslike minute lay a story of unusual interest. The "antiquities brought from Italy" had been collected by William Hamilton, not yet Sir William nor the husband of that Emma whose philanderings with Nelson have secured her

so much notoriety. In 1764 Hamilton was appointed British ambassador at the court of Naples, and occupied that position for thirty-six years, but he had not been long at his post before he discovered that he needed something more than his diplomatic duties to occupy his time. At first he turned his attention to the neighbouring Vesuvius, which he ascended twenty-two times in four years, and made the subject of exhaustive investigations. Then in a fortunate hour he bought a valuable collection of Greek vases, and from that foundation built up a remarkable museum of other vases, terracottas, ancient glass and bronzes, gems, ivories, gold ornaments and coins. These were the "antiquities brought from Italy" for the purchase of which Parliament made the grant mentioned above, and it is interesting to note that the phrase "for the use of the public" was quickly justified. The vases were at once studied and imitated by the famous potter, Josiah Wedgwood, who testified that by the sale of his copies he had in two years brought into England three times the sum voted for the purchase of Hamilton's collection. And, further, that collection was to render the additional service of leading to the formation of the present invaluable department of Greek and Roman antiquities.

Not a bequest, nor a purchase, but the spoils of war led to the organizing of another department of the museum — that of Egyptian antiquities. The

colonization of Egypt was said to be Napoleon's "darling child," hence the foundation of that "Institute of Egypt" which led so many French savants to examine the monuments of that land and its varied archæological treasures. They had made considerable progress and gathered together a deeply interesting collection by the time the British troops made their assault on Alexandria in 1801, and compelled the surrender of the French. Then it became a disputed point what was to become of the antiquities, the Frenchmen claiming that they were private property but the British general contending that they were part of the spoils of war. Of course he had his way, being in a position to enforce his views, and hence the renowned Rosetta stone, and the sarcophagus which was claimed to have been the tomb of Alexander, and a multitude of other relics of the past were shipped to England and added to the stores of the British Museum. But there was no room for them in Montagu House; that building was full to overflowing, and the Alexandrian antiquities had to be relegated to the shelter of a wooden shed.

By reason of their smaller bulk, however, such accessions as the Roberts' collection of English coins, including specimens from the Norman Conquest to contemporary times, and the Tyssen cabinets of Anglo-Saxon coins, and the De Bosset Greek coins, were provided with house room immediately

on their purchase. In these years, that is, from 1801 to 1816, the frequent acquisitions of heavy and spacious stone antiquities brought home to the trustees the urgent necessity of more gallery room. The Towneley marbles, collected in Italy by Charles Towneley, and including some of the choicest art treasures of the world, were soon to be added to the national storehouse, and in the meantime another unwearied collector was at work on an enterprise which was to emphasize more than ever the need of a new building in place of the outgrown Montagu House.

In the last year of the eighteenth century there had been dispatched to Constantinople as ambassador of England to the Porte one Thomas Bruce, seventh Earl of Elgin, a Scotsman of more than ordinary determination. He was also, like most of his race, a serious-minded man with a bent towards classical study. On the eve of his departure for Turkey, remembering that he was bound for the court of that power which had control of the affairs of Greece, he bethought him to take counsel with an architect named Harrison who was distinguished for the classical character of his buildings. Would it not be beneficial, the Earl asked, if he were able by his official position to acquire full and minute details of the architecture and sculpture of ancient Greece? Mr. Harrison's answer was heartily in the affirmative. It would be of immense value, he re-

plied, if the Earl could procure such information, and, above all, casts of whatever specimens had survived the ravages of time.

Finding his own views so warmly supported by an expert, the Earl of Elgin attempted to enlist the support of the English government, proposing that several artists should be sent out at the public expense. But his pleas fell upon deaf ears. Unfortunately, too, his own means were not ample enough to warrant him in undertaking the charges of the English artists he had in view, and it seemed as though the project would have to be abandoned. However, on his journey to Constantinople he halted at Sicily and had an opportunity to discuss his plan with Sir William Hamilton. That connoisseur reminded the Earl of Elgin that Italian artists were cheaper than English, and by his aid Elgin was able to secure the services of a Neapolitan painter, Lusieri, and several assistants, to take casts and help in making drawings. This little band proceeded to Athens at Elgin's expense, and as soon as he arrived at Constantinople he set to work to secure from the Porte permission for his artists to proceed with their work of taking drawings and making casts of the fast perishing monuments and sculptures of Athens. At first the permission was but grudgingly given, and limited in its scope, but later, owing to the success of British arms in Egypt, the Porte became exceedingly generous and issued a firman to Elgin giving

his agents not only full liberty for their sketching and casting operations but also permission to " take away any pieces of stone with old inscriptions or figures thereon."

That firman entirely changed Elgin's plans. It had been no part of his scheme to actually remove any of the ancient marbles of Athens. Yet his experience in carrying out his original purpose conclusively proved that if something were not done in a few years all the " glory that was Greece " would have disappeared. Turks and travellers and Greeks were devastating the ancient marbles in a ruthless manner. In the past half-century one glorious temple had been so utterly destroyed that even the foundation could not be discovered; another had been converted into a powder magazine and blown into fragments by an explosion; countless statues of priceless worth had been pounded into dust to make mortar; and it was no uncommon thing for the Turks to make targets of such figures as remained or climb the walls to deface any sculpture within reach. With such havoc around him, what wonder that Elgin determined to avail himself of his firman to the letter and began to remove from the Parthenon such of the metopes as were left, and the frieze, and what other fragments were in any way portable?

Such, in brief, is the story of the Elgin marbles, the addition of which to the treasures of the British

Museum was perhaps the most notable landmark in the history of its growth. But their journey to England was fraught with stirring adventure. It was no easy matter to get the marbles safely on shipboard in their huge cases, for there were no conveniences for lifting and hauling, and no roads. Once on board his ship, the *Mentor,* however, Elgin must have concluded that his heavy task was virtually at an end. Not so. The *Mentor* ran into a fierce storm off the island of Cerigo and was wrecked. Four only of the cases were salved at the time, and it was not until two years later that the other seven were raised by divers at a heavy cost. And when the marbles finally reached England, Elgin's reward was to be branded as a thief and informed by the so-called Dilettanti that he had brought home a cargo of worthless stone! His answer to the latter verdict was to place the marbles on exhibition and invite the opinion of the greatest painters and sculptors of the day. That opinion was given in no uncertain tones; all were agreed with Canova that they were the work of "the ablest artists the world had ever seen." At length a select committee of the House of Commons reported on the whole question, and found that Elgin was justified in removing the marbles, that they were of supreme merit, and that a "reasonable and sufficient price" for the collection was thirty-five thousand pounds. And for that sum Elgin surrendered his collection in 1816, although the cost to

his own purse had exceeded that amount by forty thousand pounds.

For no other single collection has the Parliament ever made so large a grant. But in the years that followed, and down to the present day, the trustees have ever been on the alert to secure desirable accessions, while the countless bequests of generous donors have contributed materially to give the British Museum its proud pre-eminence among national storehouses. Among the gifts which are conspicuous landmarks in the history of its growth should be named the collections of Mrs. Banks, Richard Payne Knight, Sir Joseph Banks, Sir William Gell, Sir William Temple, John Bowring, Edward Wigan, Henry Christy, Henry Witt, James Woodhouse, Felix Slade, and Baron Ferdinand Rothschild; while the purchases, either by the trustees or by government grant which have enriched the museum include the varied collections of Claudius Rich, H. P. Borell, Joseph Sams, Thomas Hawkins, Henry Salt, Sir Charles Fellowes, Austen Henry Layard, Nathan Davis, Edward Hawkins, Lord Napier, and many others. These collections were of great diversity, and their accumulation gradually led to the organization of the museum into the eight great departments in which its contents are now arranged.

Unlike the Louvre, the British Museum has no picture gallery in the strict sense of the word. But this does not mean that paintings have never been be-

queathed to the institution. On the contrary, they have, and, in the old days, many portraits in oils used to adorn the mineral gallery. Yet, as Sir Henry Ellis pointed out in 1835, no provision was ever made for a gallery of paintings, and consequently such bequests as were left to the museum were transferred to the National Gallery. On the other hand, as will be seen later, the department of prints and drawings has been fostered with great care and arranges for periodical exhibitions of its varied treasures.

CHAPTER V

SOME NOTABLE OFFICIALS

"I BELIEVE the present officers to be men of learning and ability." Such was the remark made by a witness in the course of his examination before the select committee which was appointed in 1835 to inquire into the condition and management of the British Museum.

More recent in date and less interested is the eulogy pronounced by the illustrious historian, John R. Seeley. "One of the greatest seats of learning in England," he said, "is the British Museum; one of the most brilliant of learned bodies is the staff which is employed by the State to take charge of that vast National Collection."

Such opinions as these might be duplicated until they reached the dimensions of a considerable volume. Rare, indeed, is it to find any biography of a notable English writer written within the past seventy years which does not contain some passage or passages which would adorn an anthology in praise of the museum officials. It is not only that those officials have been remarkable for their unfailing courtesy, for their eager willingness to assist the serious inquirer, but that to an unusual extent they have

been, especially for several generations past, men of profound learning and rare natural abilities. Despite the fact that for many years in the early stages of the museum's history the pecuniary inducements were small, the service of the institution has happily appealed in an irresistible manner to just the type of men best adapted for the custody of its treasures.

Courtesy on the part of those officials is an established tradition of the institution, dating back for at least three-quarters of a century. For example, when, during the sittings in 1835 of the committee referred to above, Anthony Panizzi was asked whether the same facilities were given to the most obscure person equally with the most celebrated, he replied emphatically and without the least hesitation:

"Yes; not long since a poor woman came to the museum; she wanted a newspaper about an enclosure. Mr. Baber happened to be present when she addressed herself to me, and he began to ask questions about the enclosure, what it was and where it was; he gave her not only the newspaper which she wanted, but a great deal of information how she was to go about to get her rights properly guarded. If she had been a lord, the only thing would have been a bow on introducing him to the reading-room, and, given the newspaper, he would then have had to find what he wanted by himself."

At the present time the officials of the museum are

almost countless; when it was first opened to the public there were four. These were the Principal Librarian, and the Keepers of the three departments in which the contents were arranged. The latter title of Keeper is still retained for the responsible heads of the eight departments, but that of Principal Librarian has been augmented to "Director and Principal Librarian." It should be noted, however, that the title of Principal Librarian has never been interpreted as having any special reference to the department of books; he has always been the official head of all the departments, and it would have prevented possible confusion had he been from the first designated by the simple term of Director. But, whatever his title, it is obvious that the Principal Librarian has from the beginning been the most important official, and that the history of the institution has been materially influenced by the men who have occupied that important position.

In qualification of that last statement, however, it must be observed that in the first half-century of the museum's history the three men who successively occupied the post of Principal Librarian appear to have regarded the position more as a sinecure of learned leisure than as one calling for initiation and alert administration. Not that the salary attached to the office was sufficient to provide its recipient with enervating luxuries; it amounted, all told, to the modest sum of two hundred pounds a

year; but that the incumbency was looked upon in the light in which Sir Walter Scott regarded the pursuit of literature, that is, as a walking-stick rather than a crutch. Hence the first Principal Librarian eked out his income by the sale of compasses, the second combined that office with the secretaryship of the Royal Society, and the third appears to have enjoyed several subsidiary sources of revenue.

Yet competition for the office was keen. For the first appointment there were two candidates who exerted themselves to the utmost in canvassing for influential support: John Hill and Gowin Knight. That the first-named should have imagined he had any chance of success is but one more proof of his inexhaustible effrontery. Hill was that quack, lampooner, and unscrupulous sponger whom Garrick gibbeted in his epigram,

> "For physic and farces, his equal there scarce is,
> His farces are physic, his physic a farce is,"

and who was the theme of Christopher Smart's "Hilliad," in which the would-be Principal Librarian was hailed with

> "O thou, whatever name delight thine ear,
> Pimp! Poet! Puffer! 'Pothecary! Play'r!"

But besides having alienated all the wits of the day, and been publicly thrashed by an Irishman

GOWIN KNIGHT.

he had insulted, Hill, because of his failure to secure election to the Royal Society, had turned his vitriolic pen against the members of that body and so enlisted the learned in the ranks of his enemies. A promising candidate, truly, for the chief office of the new institution! It is not surprising, then, that the choice fell upon Gowin Knight, who held the office for some sixteen years.

In his forty-third year at the date of his appointment, Dr. Knight was the son of a virtuoso clergyman, a graduate of Oxford, and, for a time, a practising physician. While still a young man, however, he was attracted to magnetical research and it is upon his practical and theoretical contributions to that science that his reputation principally rests. He is credited with having made a great improvement in the needle of the mariner's compass, inventing a new method of magnetizing bars, and rendering considerable service in connection with the royal navy. Notwithstanding the secluded life he is said to have lived, and the profits derived from the sale of his magnets, he was not able to steer clear of financial difficulties, for one of the most indubitable facts of his career is that he was forced to seek a loan of a thousand pounds from a friend and died without cancelling his debt. That he discharged his duties as Principal Librarian — such as they were — faithfully, may be assumed in the absence of any contrary evidence, but that his sixteen years' tenure

of office were fruitful in improvements in the museum would be too much to grant. It was a comfortable and congenial post for a man of such predilections as his, yielding a welcome addition to his small income, and, for the rest, who could blame him if he took advantage of the statutes of the museum which stipulated his attendance merely "as his duty required it?" It has been shown beyond question that the gestation of the institution was a lethargic process, the outcome, no doubt, of the lagging age which gave it birth, and consequently Dr. Knight can hardly be held blameworthy for not initiating reforms the need of which was not even dimly recognized.

His successor, Matthew Maty, was no more strenuous. If any excuse is needed in his behalf it may be found in the fact that at the time of his appointment, 1772, he had reached his fifty-fourth year and was in failing health. Like Dr. Knight, Maty was a physician, but, unlike his predecessor, was not an Englishman. Born near Utrecht, he settled in London in 1741, and, after practising for several years as a doctor, finally turned his attention to literature. For six years he conducted unaided a publication called the "*Journal Britannique*," a bi-monthly magazine which summarized in French the principal English books of the day, and thus became acquainted with numerous literary men. So considerable was his reputation that when Gibbon

DR. MATTHEW MATY.

had written his first essay and became anxious to submit it to "a critic and judge," he at once thought of Dr. Maty, a choice, the historian thought, equally "judicious and fortunate." The young author and late editor of the "*Journal Britannique*" had several "free and familiar conversations" over the essay, and when it at last appeared in print Gibbon found that Dr. Maty had inserted, without his knowledge, "an elegant and flattering epistle to the author," which was, however, so artfully worded that, "in case of defeat, his favourable report might have been ascribed to the indulgence of a friend for the rash attempt of a young English gentleman." That stroke of diplomacy gives the key to Dr. Maty's character; the guiding principle of his life was to make to himself friends of the mammon of unrighteousness. With one exception. Dr. Maty's review in his "*Journal*" of Dr. Johnson's dictionary so infuriated Boswell's hero that when Maty was suggested as a desirable assistant in connection with a projected literary review, Johnson shouted, "The little black dog! I'd throw him into the Thames first!" At that date, however, Maty had secured his foothold in the British Museum, for he was one of the first three Keepers of departments, and when Dr. Knight died he appears to have acquired the vacant position of Principal Librarian without opposition. His four years of office were as placid as Dr. Knight's sixteen. Practically all

that is recorded of him in connection with his more important post is that he, as far as possible, thwarted visitors from obtaining tickets of admission, and then connived at their being hurried through the apartments in the briefest time.

Another medical man, but this time an Englishman, Charles Morton, succeeded to the chief office of the museum on the death of Dr. Maty in 1776. Dr. Morton was to occupy the post for a longer term than the combined incumbencies of his predecessors, and, indeed, counting his service as Keeper of the manuscripts, was on the staff of the institution for forty-three years. In his subordinate office he was occupied in continuing the catalogue of the Harleian manuscripts; as Principal Librarian for twenty-three years his record is summed up by Edward Edwards in these terms: "There are several testimonies to the courtesy with which he treated such visitors as came under his personal notice, but his long term of superior office was not marked by any striking improvement in the public economy of the museum."

Lest any one should be tempted to burden the memory of these three estimable men with silent reproach for their masterly inactivity, their complete indorsement of the gospel of *laisser faire,* their "rest and be thankful" attitude, it should be noted that the nation as a whole regarded the museum with lan-

guid interest. It has been shown that Thomas Gray and Isaac Disraeli were accustomed to having but three or four fellow students in the reading-room, that the gathering of museum objects was looked upon as the occupation of a "toyman," while even so pronounced a connoisseur as Horace Walpole regarded Sir Hans Sloane's collections somewhat as a joke. The fact is, the nation had been so long without such an institution that it did not know what to do with it when it got it. The British Museum had to create its audience; it was an instrument of culture unique in the annals of the nation; and until its value was realized the official tendency would inevitably be to let things alone. Even so late as 1836 the complaint could be made that "public opinion is exercised only upon one of the purposes for which the British Museum was instituted; that is, upon its establishment as a show place. Unfortunately as to its most important and most noble purpose, as an establishment for the furtherance of education, for study and research, the public seem to be almost indifferent."

As Dr. Morton's term of office exceeded that of his two predecessors combined, so even his own reign of twenty-three years was to be eclipsed by the rule of his successor, Joseph Planta, who, like Dr. Maty, was of foreign birth. Born at Castegna in Switzerland, educated at Utrecht and Göttingen, broadened by travel in France and Italy, and rendered still

more cosmopolitan by diplomatic employment at Brussels, Planta joined the staff of the British Museum in 1773, became keeper of the manuscript department three years later, and, on the death of Dr. Morton, was appointed Principal Librarian in 1799. His twenty-eight years' occupancy of that post marked the beginning of a new era. He found the old restrictions as to admission and study still in full force; when he laid down his trust they had been materially relaxed: in his early days the students frequenting the reading-room did not number two hundred a year; by 1827 they exceeded six hundred: a few years after his assumption of office less than twenty artists were in the habit of drawing from the antique annually; in 1824 they had increased to nearly three hundred. These figures speak for themselves and bear cogent witness to a more liberal policy, which, in its turn, is conclusive evidence of Planta's fitness for his post and his zeal to make the museum an important factor in the development of national culture. It was during his regime, too, that the trustees began that noble series of publications which have diffused a knowledge of the museum's treasures and added so conspicuously to the literature of learning. Planta bore his full share in the compilation of catalogues, and in his spare time completed that "History of the Helvetic Confederacy" which made him the first historian in English of his native land. His name, then, will

JOSEPH PLANTA.

SIR HENRY ELLIS.

always be distinguished on the roll-call of Principal Librarians.

Twenty-seven years before Planta's death the museum staff was augmented by that laborious and genial antiquary, Henry Ellis, who was to become his successor and retain the position of Principal Librarian for the record period of twenty-nine years. Ellis entered the service of the institution as a temporary assistant in the library in 1800, but six years later he had risen to the responsible position of keeper of the printed books. This rapid promotion had its origin in that theft of prints by Robert Dighton already mentioned, the consequent resignation of William Beloe making an unexpected vacancy. As the chief official of the library Ellis's principal contribution to the increased efficiency of the department consisted in his labours on the improvement of the catalogue, but it was not until he was transferred to the charge of the manuscript department that he began the compilation of those volumes by which he is best known among students of history. The first series of "Original Letters illustrative of English History" was published in 1824, the second series following three years later, and the third in 1848. In addition he edited for the Camden Society in 1843 his equally fascinating volume of "Original Letters of Eminent Literary Men," most of the material for all these books having been selected from the manuscripts in the Brit-

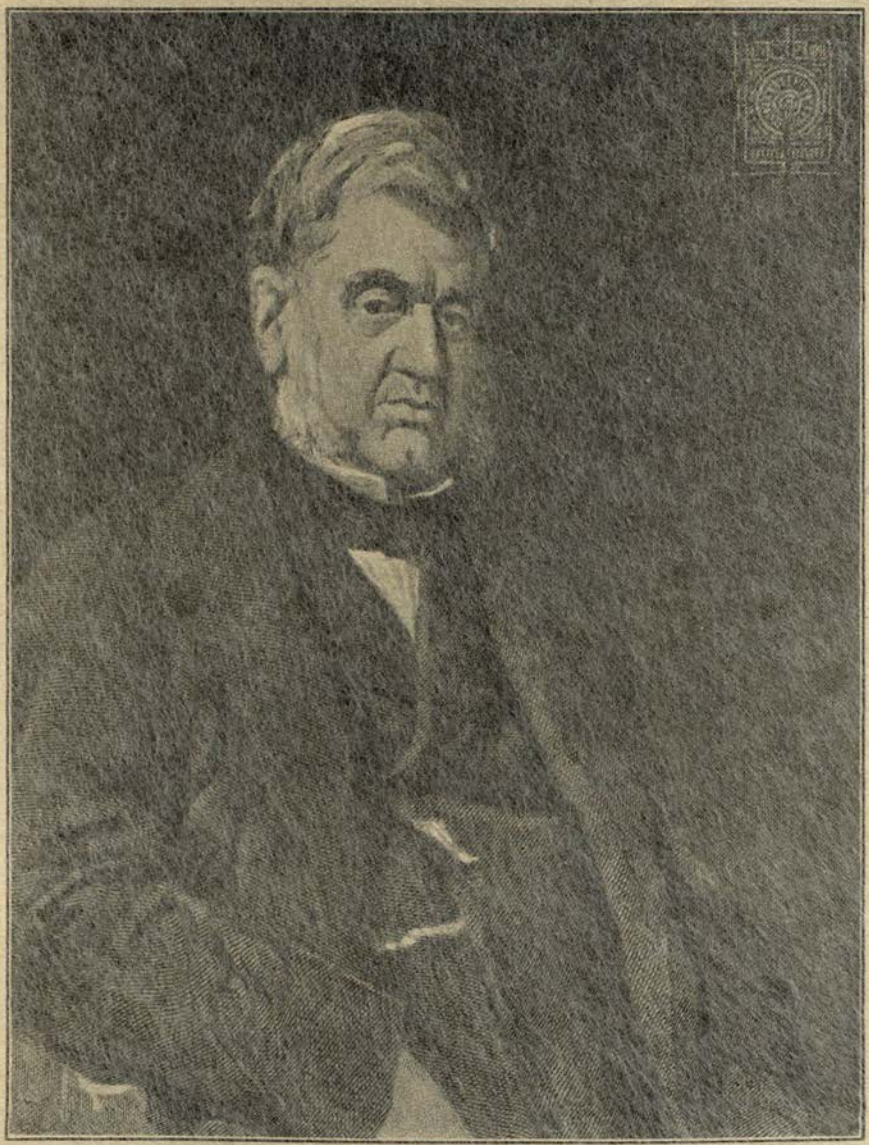
ish Museum. Welcomed at the time of their publication for their entertainment and instruction, and applauded by scholars for the varied and minute knowledge displayed in the notes by which they were elucidated, these twelve volumes still delight and inform their numerous readers and remain invaluable for the light they throw on the byways of history. Ellis also placed to his credit a general introduction to the Domesday Book, which has been described as "unquestionably the most valuable of his antiquarian labours, and a work of very great importance."

Unfortunately no such consensus of eulogy can be adduced in relation to his administration as Principal Librarian. Eight years after his appointment to that office — an appointment which he is said to have secured by "pursuing the carriage of the royal physician, Sir William Knighton, and enlisting his good offices with the king" — the internal economy of the institution was such as to justify the famous committee of inquiry of 1835-6. That committee may have had its origin in private pique, but the revelations made during its protracted sittings amply demonstrated the need for its labours. Naturally Sir Henry Ellis was the first witness called, and he was examined and re-examined at great length. From his answers it is easy to diagnose the kindly but unprogressive nature of the man. He was an ideal antiquary; one who remembered but did not anticipate; his interests were in the past

and use and wont were second nature. One or two examples will be sufficient. When asked whether he could suggest any improvement in the constitution of the museum, he replied, "I cannot, as far as relates to the administration of it. I believe it to be as faithfully administered and as perfectly administered as such an institution can allow." And, again, in defence of the custom of closing the museum for three weeks each autumn, he argued that if that were not done the place would become "unwholesome," and that to open the museum during the Easter holidays would be dangerous as "the most mischievous portion of the population is abroad and about at such a time." That dread of the masses was evidently an obsession with Ellis, for he pleaded still further for the closing of the institution on public holidays on the ground that "people of a higher grade would hardly wish to come to the museum at the same time with sailors from the dockyards and the girls whom they might bring with them." In fact there is no disputing the general verdict of Richard Garnett, than whom no gentler judge could be desired by the most obdurate offender. Ellis's "administrative faculties, which had served him well during a period of mere routine, were inadequate to cope with the rapidly augmenting demands of the country, and the inevitable, almost involuntary, increase of the institution. His views, though natural enough at the beginning of

the century, seemed strangely illiberal in the era of the Reform Bill. . . . He possessed, indeed, few qualifications for the chief office except industry and kindness of heart, and the latter very essential quality certainly went too far with him. . . . A diligent antiquary and an amiable man, he could scarcely be blamed if the altered circumstances of his times rendered him unequal to a post which at an earlier period he would have filled with distinction."

But during at least the last decade of Sir Henry Ellis's term of office the real head of the museum was not the Principal Librarian. Virtually, though not in name, the chief control had passed into the hands of Anthony Panizzi, the third of the foreign-born members of the staff who attained the highest post of the institution. A native of Italy, he sought refuge in England from the perils to which his political views had exposed him, and in 1831 was, through his friend Brougham's influence, appointed as an assistant librarian. He quickly justified his appointment by the amount and thoroughness of his work, which won such appreciation from Thomas Grenville that when a proposal for an increase in Panizzi's salary was rejected by the trustees that warm-hearted booklover left the board-room and never attended another meeting. Panizzi's evidence before the select committee of 1835-6 revealed the far-reaching nature of his knowledge of books, his passion for work, and his fertility of ideas. He told,



SIR ANTHONY PANIZZI.

for example, how he had devoted his vacation to a tour on the Continent expressly undertaken to examine the working of famous libraries, and enunciated his gospel as a librarian in these terms: "I want a poor student to have the same means of indulging his learned curiosity, of following his rational pursuits, of consulting the same authorities, of fathoming the most intricate inquiry, as the richest man in the kingdom, as far as books go, and I contend that government is bound to give him the most liberal and unlimited assistance in this respect." To every question he gave a prompt and lucid answer, and nothing could move him from his position that more space was necessary for housing the library and a liberal annual grant needed for adding to its treasures. And those who are experts in such matters affirm that Panizzi's views on cataloguing stamped him as "the greatest legislator the world of librarianship had yet seen."

He was quickly afforded an opportunity to transmute his theories into practice. A year after the committee had concluded its inquiry he was made keeper of the printed books, and that date, 1837, marked the opening of that new era which resulted in elevating the library of the British Museum to its position of world-leadership. But the appointment did not pass without protest; then and later, when he was made Principal Librarian, Panizzi was objected to as "a foreigner," even though he had long

been a naturalized Englishman. Consequently, when a second inquiry was held in 1848, the critics of the museum concentrated their forces on Panizzi, who, however, rebutted all accusations in a triumphant manner. Macaulay summed up the situation admirably when the "foreigner" was elected to the chief office. "I am glad of this," he wrote on being informed of the appointment, "both on public and private grounds. Yet I fear that the appointment will be unpopular both within and without the walls of the museum. There is a growing jealousy among men of science which, between ourselves, appears even at the board of trustees. There is a notion that the department of natural history is neglected, and that the library and the sculpture gallery are unduly favoured. This feeling will certainly not be allayed by the appointment of Panizzi, whose great object, during many years, has been to make our library the best in Europe, and who would at any time give three mammoths for an Aldus." Panizzi was, unquestionably, more deeply interested in his own department than in any other, but it should not be forgotten that so early as 1836 he declared that the department of natural history "ought to have better assistance" and be transferred to more suitable premises.

From the spectacular point of view Panizzi's greatest achievement was the institution and completion of that scheme for the erection of the famous

circular Reading-Room already referred to; his equally important labours in strengthening the weak places of the library, securing more liberal grants from Parliament, influencing by his private friendship the donations of valuable accessions as in the case of Thomas Grenville, elevating the standard of public regard for the museum as a whole, and securing civil service recognition for the staff can be appreciated only by those familiar with the inner history of the institution.

In his sympathetic sketch of the famous librarian Dr. Garnett speaks of Panizzi as leading "a second life of incessant occupation with politics, especially as they affected the movement for the liberation of Italy." But even that does not take full account of Panizzi's bewildering activities. He was also an author of no mean ability, gratefully remembered to this day for his fine edition of Ariosto's "Orlando Furioso" and still more for his services in connection with Boiardo's "Orlando Innamorato." So many-sided a man naturally had numerous friends; they included statesmen of the highest rank in Whig circles such as Lord Palmerston, Lord Russell, and Mr. Gladstone; men of letters of such eminence as Samuel Rogers, Henry Hallam, Sydney Smith, George Grote, and Lord Macaulay; but it may be doubted whether any of these appreciated his fine qualities more keenly than his colleagues at the British Museum, who entertained for him a feeling "not

only of admiration but also of affectionate respect."

Panizzi's term of office as Principal Librarian extended from 1856 to 1866, he resigning in the latter year and being succeeded by John Winter Jones, who had already been some thirty years in the service of the museum. He had been an active and leading member of the committee which framed the ninety-one rules of cataloguing now famous among librarians, and generally Panizzi's right-hand man in his campaign of reform. Whether as Keeper of the printed books or as Principal Librarian, Jones was ever an ideal officer of the museum, distinguished by "industry, regularity, and the general attainment of a high standard of efficiency." Beyond editing several books for the Hakluyt Society and contributing to "useful knowledge" publications and to the reviews, he did little work as a writer, wisely contenting himself with the zealous discharge of his official duties and with carrying on the traditions of his predecessor.

When Jones resigned in 1878 the competent and reforming Keeper of the manuscript department, Edward A. Bond, was promoted to the chief office of the museum and during his reign of ten years many further improvements were carried out. Two of these, the substitution of a printed for the unwieldy manuscript catalogue, and the adoption of sliding presses to provide additional space for new

books, added materially to the efficiency of the Reading-Room; another, the introduction of electric light, enhanced the safety of the museum as a whole and increased its availability for the use of the public. It was under Bond's direction, too, that the natural history collections were removed to their new home at South Kensington, and that the White Wing was added to the structure at Bloomsbury. "Nothing," as one of his colleagues has testified, "was more remarkable in him than his openness of mind, and a receptiveness of new ideas most unusual in a veteran official." He has, however, other claims upon remembrance, for in addition to his eminent services in bringing the manuscript department to an ideal standard of efficiency, he was co-founder of the Palæological Society and edited in a scholarly manner many important works. It was his associate in the foundation of the Palæological Society, Edward Maunde Thompson, who succeeded him as Principal Librarian in 1888, just as he had followed him in the keepership of the manuscript department. The ninth Principal Librarian, who has so many learned volumes to his credit, retained the office until 1909, when the present incumbent, Frederic George Kenyon, was appointed. As was the case with both of his immediate predecessors, Dr. Kenyon previously held office in the manuscript department and had attained an enviable reputation for his palæographical knowledge and for the ripe scholarship

which had been demonstrated, among numerous other publications, by his text and translation of Aristotle's "Constitution of Athens." That the present Director and Principal Librarian is responsive to the needs of the times is illustrated by the recent (March, 1911) introduction of a public telephone into the museum; that he will guide its destinies along the lines of making its departments still more efficient as instruments of knowledge may be safely augured from his scholarly record.

In giving a brief account of the notable men who have held the chief office of the British Museum it has been thought best to maintain a chronological sequence, but it would be unjust to leave the reader with the impression that the Principal Librarians have been the only men of note connected with the institution. That is far from the truth. It would mean that in a century and a half but ten distinguished men have been attracted to the service of the British nation in that particular connection, whereas the ranks of museum officials have included H. F. Cary, Josiah Forshall, Frederic Madden, the Richard Garnetts, father and son, John Thomas Smith, Henry H. Baber, T. H. Horne, Thomas Watts, Coventry Patmore, and such eminent living authorities as Sir Sidney Colvin, Dr. E. A. Wallis Budge, Dr. G. F. Warner, George K. Fortescue, Dr. Lionel D. Barnett, and many more.

One member of the early band of scholars attained

a distinction which no Principal Librarian has yet achieved, that is, burial in the famous Poet's Corner of Westminster Abbey. Such was the climax of Henry F. Cary's useful life — a life which enriched English literature by that translation of Dante which extorted from Macaulay the verdict that it placed Dante under a greater debt "than ever poet owed to translator," and was described by Southey as "a translation of magnitude and difficulty, executed with perfect fidelity and admirable skill." And a critic with more acumen than either of those, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, wrote Cary: "This is the excellence of the work considered as a translation of Dante, that it gives the reader a similar feeling of wandering and wandering, onward and onward."

Cary had completed his translation fourteen years before he joined the staff of the British Museum. But he was already rich in the friendship of Coleridge, Lamb, Wordsworth, Southey, and many another son of fame. His initiation into that distinguished circle began by his making the acquaintance of Coleridge in a novel manner. Wandering along the seashore during a holiday, Cary was amusing himself by reciting Homer to his son, when his enunciation of the Greek lines arrested the attention of another stroller, who introduced himself with, "Sir, yours is a face I *should* know. I am Samuel Taylor Coleridge." The other friendships followed as a

matter of course, leading to those convivial literary evenings in Cary's rooms at old Montagu House at one of which Lamb imbibed so freely that he had to be sent home early in a hackney coach. Cary's duties in the library of the museum were not onerous, for he was "mainly employed in cataloguing new purchases and acquisitions by copyright," but when the keepership of the department became vacant he could not rid his mind of the delusion that he was fully qualified for that important post, and has, unhappily, to be reckoned among those provincial persons who resented Panizzi's appointment on the score of his being a "foreigner."

One of Cary's contemporaries at the museum was Josiah Forshall, the Keeper of the manuscript department and afterwards secretary to the trustees, who is remembered for the capable editing of various manuscript catalogues and his partnership with Frederic Madden in preparing that edition of the Bible which reproduced the earliest English versions made by John Wycliffe and his followers. His evidence before the famous select committee revealed him as a determined opponent of everything tending to popularize the museum. Madden, too, was an accomplished palæographer, having, as Dr. Garnett asserts, "no rival in his day," his "sagacity, confirmed by long practice, appearing almost intuition." Apart from his labours at the museum, he published four great editions of ancient works

" which stand out decisively from the mass of similar publications." Of Richard Garnett, the elder, Southey testified that he was " a very remarkable person," adding, " I do not know any man who has read so much which you would not expect him to have read; " of Richard Garnett the younger there are yet alive many to whom his name is a fragrant memory for what it recalls of gracious kindliness and willingness to share to the utmost with the humblest student the rich stores of his varied learning. He will live long in literary history, too, as the picturesque biographer of Carlyle, Emerson, and Milton, as the writer of much graceful verse, and the teller of many original and fanciful tales. In the history of the British Museum library, as has been justly said, " his place is second only to that of Panizzi."

But to continue the list is impossible within the space to which this history must be confined. So far as the roll-call is written, it is one which amply justifies Professor Seeley's eulogy; that the names added to it in the coming years will not be less illustrious needs no proving. All of which, in addition to being exceedingly reassuring to the present race of studious inquirers, must warm the learned ghosts of Sir Robert Cotton, the two Harleys, and Sir Hans Sloane.

II

THE BRITISH MUSEUM: ITS TREASURES

CHAPTER I

THE PRINTED BOOKS

Such prominence has already been given to the purely literary treasures of the British Museum that it will perhaps be most convenient to describe first those sections of the building which are devoted to the important department of printed books. Besides, they are quickly in evidence as soon as the visitor finds himself in the entrance hall, for while the galleries of the Grenville and King's Libraries are immediately to his right, he has but to walk straight ahead for the swinging glass doors which give ingress to the world-famous circular Reading-Room.

In that direction, however, the visitor's progress will be barred unless he possesses a reader's ticket or has applied for an admission order. The latter can be obtained in the entrance hall and is given without delay to all adults; the former can be secured only by written application to the Director, which must be accompanied by suitable recommendation from a householder of established position. When armed with an admission order merely the visitor is personally conducted and not allowed further inside the Reading-Room than the immediate neigh-

bourhood of the entrance door; the happy possessor of a reader's ticket has entire freedom of that spacious apartment, and ample time to note at will not only its huge proportions but also the minute attention which has been devoted to facilitating his studies and ensuring his personal comfort.

Figures are stark looking things at the best, but the curious in such matters will be interested to learn that the dome of the Reading-Room is one hundred and forty feet in diameter, and its height one hundred and six feet. Part of the daylight which floods the room comes from the lantern, which is forty feet in diameter, and part from the twenty circular-headed windows which divide the dome at a height of thirty-five feet from the ground. These windows are twenty-seven feet high by twelve feet wide. The cubic space of the apartment extends to a million and a quarter feet. And all this huge area is provided for less than five hundred readers! To criticize this liberality may seem ungracious or to partake of the nature of sacrilege, for the Reading-Room is pre-eminently the "show" architectural feature of the museum; but in view of the fact that the cry is ever "more room" for books, and the further fact that part of the newspaper stores have had to be removed and by that removal are less available for immediate reference, it is almost inexplicable that something has not been done to utilize the immense space which is now wasted. Five

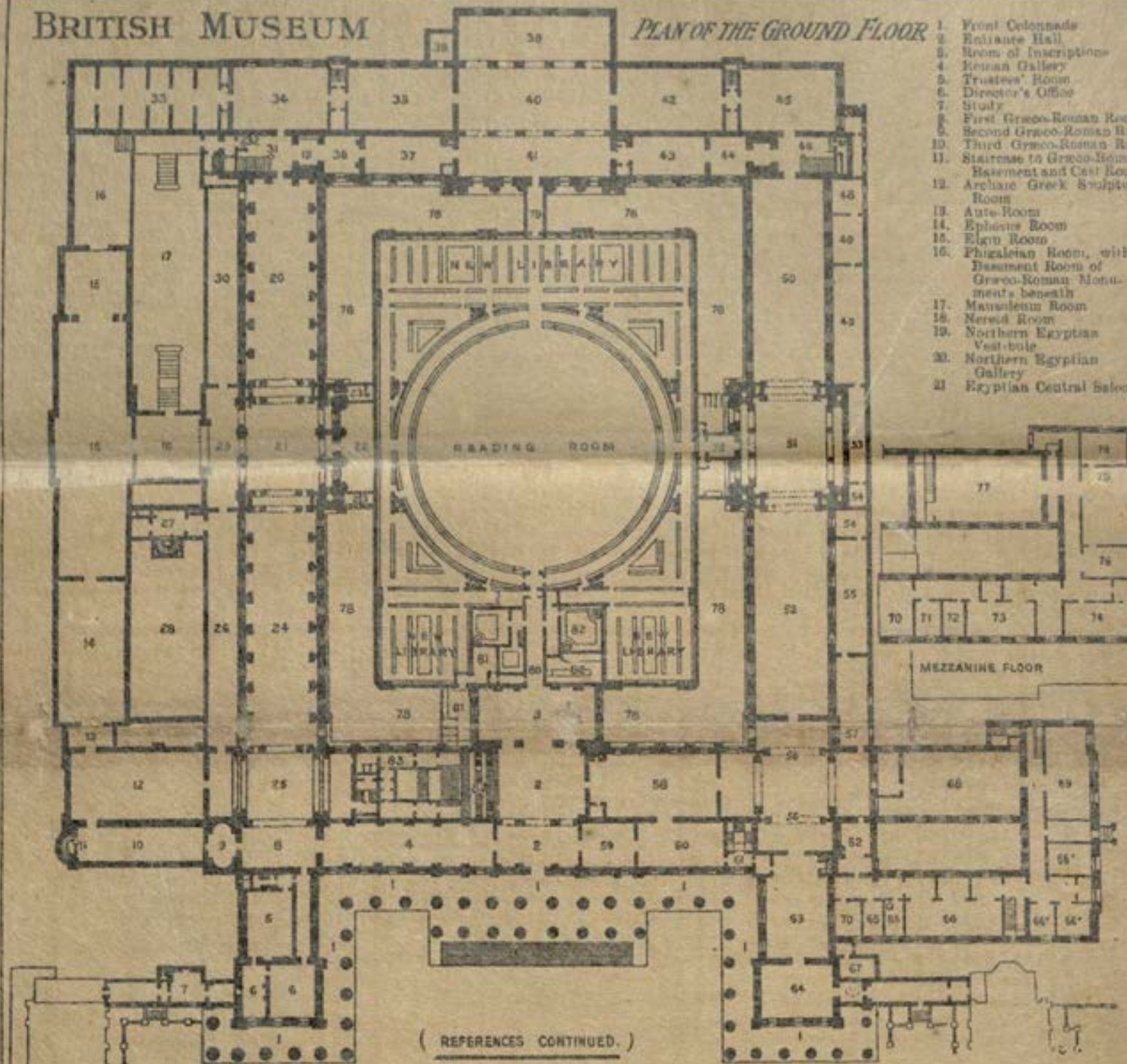
hundred readers do not require a hundred and six feet of air above their heads; in what other public room in daily use is there such a protracted interval between humanity's six-foot of height and the roof which shelters it from the heavens? If those five hundred had but fifty feet of air space above them they would be as comfortable as they are with their hundred and six, and the other fifty odd would provide room for the book-growth for many generations. At the very least it is obvious that nothing would be lost by carrying the floor of the Reading-Room to the level of the first gallery, and that in itself would relieve the space pressure for at least half a century. Laudable as was Panizzi's scheme, it was, after all, a wasteful scheme, for the object of a library is not primarily to be an architectural wonder.

But, taking things as they are, there is probably no reading-room in the world where the student is so well cared for, so quickly served, and so free from officialism as in the British Museum. That his surroundings are nobly impressive will have been gathered from the figures cited above, and whenever he lifts his eyes from his studies they can hardly fail to be gratified by the restful scheme of decoration in white and gold which was carried out when the room was thoroughly overhauled two years ago. The ground-floor plan in diagram has a striking resemblance to a wheel, the hub being represented by the superintendent's desk, raised

sufficiently to command a view of the room, and the spokes by the readers' tables. Of the latter there are thirty-five, with seats on either side, giving accommodation for four hundred and fifty-eight readers. The longer tables are screened down the centre, that screen being provided on either side with a hinged desk and a folding shelf for books not in immediate use. In addition there is a recessed niche for carrying pens and a penwiper, and each individual reader has in all table room amounting to four feet three inches in length by two feet one inch in depth. Artificial light is supplied from four arc lamps of great power, supplemented by glow-lamps at the readers' tables. The ventilation is admirable, the warming thoroughly efficient. And yet, notwithstanding all this attention to the comfort of students, there are probably readers to this day who sympathize with a part of Thomas Carlyle's complaint about the old reading-room. "I never do enter the room," he said, "without getting a headache — what I call the museum headache — and therefore I avoid the room till the last extremity." It is not perhaps a headache from which some present-day workers suffer, but rather a general lowering of bodily and mental vitality, a heaviness of spirit, induced, perhaps, by the oppressive silence which has of course to be rigidly maintained. Many a Reading-Room habitue will confess to a desire to shout aloud or indulge in some unconven-

BRITISH MUSEUM

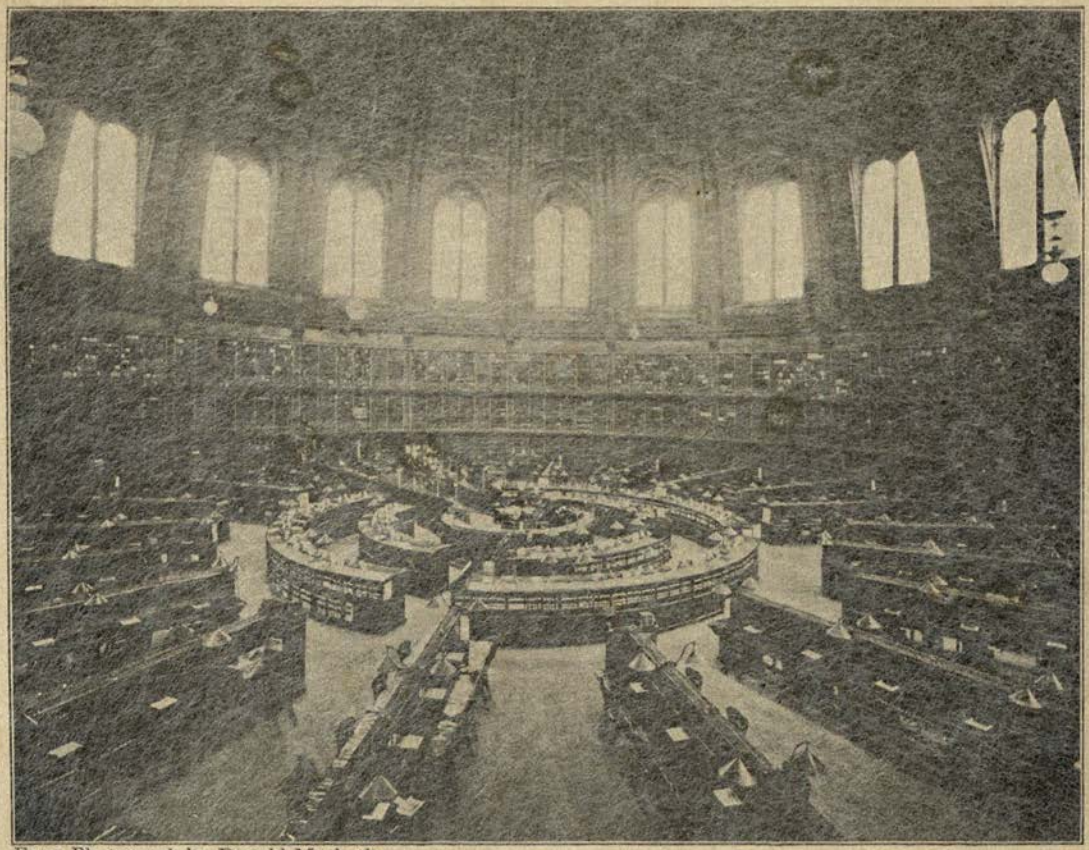
PLAN OF THE GROUND FLOOR



1. Front Colonnade
2. Entrance Hall
3. Room of Inscriptions
4. Roman Gallery
5. Trustees' Room
6. Director's Office
7. Study
8. First Graeco-Roman Room
9. Second Graeco-Roman Rm.
10. Third Graeco-Roman Rm.
11. Staircase to Graeco-Roman Basement and Cast Room
12. Archaic Greek Sculpture Room
13. Ante-Room
14. Ephesus Room
15. Elgin Room
16. Phigaleian Room, with Basement Room of Graeco-Roman Monuments beneath
17. Mausoleum Room
18. Nereid Room
19. Northern Egyptian Vestibule
20. Northern Egyptian Gallery
21. Egyptian Central Saloon

(REFERENCES CONTINUED.)

22. Refreshment Room
23. Lavatories [Gallery
24. Southern Egyptian
25. Assyrian Transept
26. Nimroud Gallery
27 & 28. Assyrian Saloon
29. Nimroud Central Saloon
30. Nineveh Gallery
31. North West Staircase
32. Ladies' Lavatory
33. Arch Room
34. Second Supplementary Room
35. First Supplementary Room.
36. North West Lobby
37. Cracherode Room
38. Study
39 to 41. Central Northern Library
42. Music Room.
43. Banksian Room
44. North East Room
45. Catalogue Room
46. North East Staircase
47. Lavatories
48. Study
49. Sorting Room
50 to 52. King's Library
53. Hebrew Library
54. Studies
55. Chinese and Japanese Library
56. Manuscript Saloon
57. Oriental Students' Room
58. Grenville Library
59. Egerton Room
60. Manuscript Map Room
61. Passage
62. Study
63. Middle Room of MSS.
64. South Room of MSS.
65. Sorting and Attendants' Rooms
66. Students' Room for MSS.
66* Copyright Office
67. Study
68. Newspaper Room
69. Newspaper Reading Room
70. Staircase to Manuscript Department
71 & 72. Studies, Manuscript Department
73. Work Room, Manuscript Department
74. Mounters' Rm., Prints
75. Assistants' Room, Prints
76. Studies
77. Oriental Library
78. Area
79. Passages
80. Reading-Room Corridor
81. Female Readers' Cloak-Room & Lavatory
82. Male Readers' Cloak-Room, etc.
83. Female Students' Lavatory
84. Principal Staircase



From Photograph by Donald Macbeth.

BRITISH MUSEUM: READING ROOM.

tional relief to his pent-up feelings. Whether it is still true, as was once complained, that "there is a flea generated in that room that is larger than any to be found elsewhere," is a matter upon which no adequate information is forthcoming. It needs a Parliamentary Inquiry to elicit such picturesque details.

If the flea has disappeared, so also has that table which used to be reserved for the fair sex. Thus does suffragism march to victory! For surely that last vestige of the distinction between the sexes must have been swept away in deference to woman's strident claim of equality. Some sixty years ago a historian of the Reading-Room noted that the women readers were "not numerous, but they are ominous of a social revolution." He added, however, that "it is in the pursuits of art and literature that we think we recognize one of the means for asserting the independence of woman without any sacrifice of the gentler graces of her sex." But then this philosopher proceeded to take back half he had admitted by implying that the lady students cared for nothing more than romance, declaring of one that "it is any odds that the folio before her is Sidney's 'Arcadia,' or one of Scudoni's romances, and that she is reading it with all the faith, interest and self-application of fifteen." Two or three decades ago the feminine preserve of the Reading-Room led to a little squabble between the sexes, one of the blue-stockings charging her male

rivals with deliberately filching from her special table the leather-covered chairs and substituting for them the wooden-seated abominations which she detested. To which a spokesman for the sterner sex rejoined that the lady was welcome to all the stuffed chairs in the room, provided she and her sex would keep to their own table and not invade the male seats all over the room. "You may see a dozen of these fair creatures at as many desks — shining out, it is true, like flowers in a parterre — all the room over, whilst a dozen seats at the ladies' desks are left still unclaimed by, and altogether desolate of, fair occupants." But all these cheerful amenities are of the past; there is still a choice of chairs stuffed or plain; but the dividing line between the sexes has gone, and the "shining" flowers — a few in early bloom but the majority past their prime — scatter themselves where they will.

And if Washington Irving could return he would observe another radical change. Instead of those "black-looking portraits of ancient authors" which he noted above the bookcases there are, high up on the breastwork of the windows, nineteen panels adorned with just the names alone of as many English immortals, beginning with Chaucer and ending with Browning. That would have spoilt Geoffrey Crayon's inimitable dream. For did he not lay emphasis upon those portraits so that when he fell asleep amid the bookmakers around him he

could imagine the old authors starting from their frames to charge with theft the busy plagiarists below? He saw in his dreamland vision how proud the purloiners were of their borrowed garments, how they pranced to and fro in their stolen finery, until, at "the height of this literary masquerade, a cry suddenly resounded from every side of 'Thieves! Thieves!' I looked, and lo! the portraits above the wall became animated! The old authors thrust out, first a head, then a shoulder, from the canvas, looked down curiously, for an instant, upon the motley throng, and then descended with fury in their eyes to claim their rifled property. The scene of scampering and hubbub that ensued baffles all description. The unhappy culprits endeavoured in vain to escape with their plunder. . . . I was grieved to see so many men, to whom I had been accustomed to look up with awe and reverence, fain to steal off with scarce a rag to cover their nakedness." Perhaps it was a lively recollection of this distressing exposure which prompted the trustees to decorate the Reading-Room with names instead of portraits.

But the "conveying" goes on down below as industriously as ever. The purloiners must take confidence from the substitution of names for portraits that might raise a hue and cry. So among those busy writers are members of Parliament "cramming" for the debate which is to pave their

way to cabinet office, ministers of religion abstracting sermons which are to give them a spurious reputation for eloquence and exalt them in the affections of languishing females, poets gathering a bouquet of flowers not their own growing, novelists in feverish search for forgotten plots, and many another aspirant to fame. But after all, as Irving said, this pilfering disposition may be the device of Providence for the preservation of the seeds of knowledge and wisdom. And, of course, there are among the readers many, very many, who are adding to the seed-store of learning and wit, and others who only help themselves to a gem or two which sparkles among their own ornaments "without eclipsing them."

What treasures they all have to draw upon! Here again the curious will demand figures, and yet how little use they are. In the book-presses which surround the entire Reading-Room, to which every reader has free access without having to fill in a slip of any kind, there are some twenty thousand volumes; the contents of the two galleries above bring the total number actually in sight to a total of about seventy thousand. But the entire library comprises some two and a half million volumes. In the New Library and Reading-Room there are three miles of bookcases eight feet in height; in the entire department there are forty-six miles of shelving. And this does not take account

of the newspaper-room, or of the Hendon Repository, to which all save London newspapers have been exiled. Statistical minds may be able to extract some gratification from these figures; to the ordinary mind they will convey but little even when aided by the imposing array made by the seventy thousand volumes in the Reading-Room itself. Besides, it should, in justice, be added that the official total of two and a half millions does not include the pamphlets and other small publications usually counted in other libraries. If they were reckoned the total would be nearer five millions. On the character of the library as a whole the following impartial verdict has been passed: "The collection of English books is far from approaching completeness, but, apart from the enormous number of volumes, the library contains an extraordinary quantity of rarities. Few libraries in the United States can equal either in number or value the American books in the museum. The collection of Slavonic literature, due to the initiative of Thomas Watts, is also a remarkable feature. Indeed, in cosmopolitan interest the museum is without a rival in the world, possessing as it does the best library in any European language out of the territory in which the language is vernacular."

Literal as well as literary thefts have not been unknown in the history of the Reading-Room. In his attractive "Memories of the British Museum"

Robert Cowtan states that the trustees have not infrequently been compelled to institute criminal proceedings against some who have abused the privileges of the library by stealing books. "In every case conviction followed; and the offenders were sentenced to long terms of imprisonment with hard labour. Mutilation of books has also occurred: I recollect some flagrant instances of this nature, where the parties were discovered and severely punished. One was that of a man well known, and, I may add, highly respected. He was writing a life of Daniel O'Connell, M. P., and had consulted the newspapers for information that was required. Some of the speeches were too long to be copied, and the reader deliberately cut them out with a pen-knife. He was discovered and punished. Another instance I recollect well, as I was engaged with others for some weeks in making the requisite examination of books he had used, in order to bring the offender to justice. He was an artist, and committed wholesale depredations among books containing prints and engravings. He was, however, discovered, but not before he had succeeded in filling a large scrap-book with plates which he had abstracted from books in the national library. Not long since, a long set of 'The Pulpit,' in many volumes, had to be removed from its place in the Reading-Room, as many entire sermons had been cut out." After all, however, these offences are but

few in number compared with the vast army of readers using the room. Two years ago they numbered over two hundred and thirty thousand, maintained a daily average of seven hundred and sixty, and, in course of the year, consulted close on a million and a half volumes.

While of great interest to bibliophiles, minute details as to the treasures of the museum library mean so little to the general reader that they would be out of place in these pages; besides, the ordinary visitor has no opportunity to examine those treasures, and may not even consult the volumes in the open presses of the Reading-Room. There are, however, two adjuncts of the library where his liberty is not so restrained, namely, the galleries where are kept the handsome volumes of the Grenville and King's Libraries. As has been stated already, these apartments lead off the right of the entrance hall and are open to every visitor. Not that the books can be handled; on the contrary they are protected by glass doors, enabling the curious to see if they cannot read.

Turning to the right, then, from the entrance hall the visitor enters first the room devoted to the choice volumes bequeathed to the museum by the Rt. Hon. Thomas Grenville. As with the other galleries, there are many glass-covered cases in this apartment, but their contents have no relation to the Grenville Library as such. As the exhibits in

those cases are designed to illustrate the development of manuscript illumination, their consideration must be reserved for the succeeding chapter. It is the printed book, and the printed book alone, which claims immediate attention. And in this one gallery there are upwards of twenty thousand such volumes.

Apart from the King's Library the Grenville collection is the most important single accession ever made to the literary treasures of the museum. "Formed and preserved," as Panizzi wrote, "with the exquisite taste of an accomplished bibliographer, with the learning of a profound and elegant scholar, and the splendid liberality of a gentleman in affluent circumstances," it is not surprising that while the outward appearance of the volumes is indicative of their former owner's wealth the works themselves bear convincing testimony to his catholic learning. The editions of Homer and Æsop are among the rarest known; Latin classics are represented by the unique copy of Azzoguidi's first edition of Ovid and the Aldine Virgil of 1505; among the English poets included are the first and second editions of Chaucer's "Canterbury Tales" and the first edition of Shakespeare's collected works; in the domain of English history are countless contemporary works on the advance and defeat of the Spanish Armada; Spanish and Italian literature are exhibited by many rare volumes. "But," as

Panizzi, who knew the volumes as intimately as their owner, remarked, "where there is nothing common, it is almost depreciating a collection to enumerate a few books as rare." It constitutes a worthy vestibule to the book treasures of the museum, and, as in life, it is meet that the generous donor's presence should preside in its midst. Whether, however, the rear of the catalogue table is the best position for displaying the bust of Grenville is open to question; one is reluctant to study its refined and benevolent lineaments lest the occupation should excite in the catalogue-seller anticipations of purchases which are not to be realized.

From the Grenville to the King's Library is only a few steps, for the visitor has but to pass into the manuscript saloon and turn to the left to find himself in the noble gallery where are stored the volumes collected at so much expense by George III and "presented" to the nation by his inglorious son. This, as has been stated, is the oldest portion of the present museum buildings, it having been erected in 1828 specially for the reception of the royal library. Here, too, one comes upon an association which must always lend interest to this section of the museum. Macaulay, as his nephew wrote, was most assiduous in his attendance at the institution, both as a trustee and a student. "His habit was to work in the King's Library; partly for quiet; and partly in order to have George the

Third's wonderful collection of pamphlets within an easy walk of his chair. He did his writing at one of the oak tables which stand in the centre of the room, sitting away from the outer wall, for the sake of the light. He availed himself of his official authority to search the shelves at pleasure without the intervention of a librarian; and (says the attendant) 'when he had taken down a volume, he generally looked as if he had found something in it.'"

Perhaps Macaulay's oak table is preserved somewhere, but neither it nor any other table now stands in the centre of the room. On either side, however, are numerous show-cases, some containing Oriental manuscripts and others reserved for temporary exhibitions, but the bulk given up to a deeply interesting sequence of books illustrating the development of printing in Europe from its earliest stages. The cases begin on the left-hand side of the room, but after he has inspected number one the visitor will have to cross the aisle to the right for number two, and continue that zigzagging process down the gallery.

Seeing that the first case is devoted to block-books, it would almost appear as though the museum authorities subscribe to the theory that printing from the solid block must have preceded printing from movable types, but the origins of printing are still shrouded in so much mystery and doubt

that it is idle to demand any definite statement on the question of priority. The experts seem to have decided upon one conclusion which is flattering to European vanity, and that is that the Western world was not indebted to either China or Japan for the art of block-printing or printing from movable types, although both were known and practised in the East many centuries before they came into use in Europe. The ten block-books in this show-case represent a period of about seventy years, beginning with the "Ars Moriendi," which is attributed to an unknown Netherlands printer of about 1460, and ending in 1530 with the last known example. The fact that block-printing was continued for so long after movable types were in general use certainly does militate against the theory that movable type was a development of the solid block. It seems wiser to leave that problem in abeyance and be content with the fact that as the block served the purpose of a stereotype plate its survival should not be cited as evidence one way or another.

Of course block-printing was a primitive form of typography. It was a simple matter to cut pictures and letter-press in wood, and then take an impression by smearing the surface with some kind of ink and pressing a piece of paper into contact. At first the block-books were printed on one side of the paper only, but when a press became available they were printed on both sides after the manner of a

modern volume. Sometimes these early books consisted wholly of illustrations, at others of text and pictures combined on the same, or of text on some pages and cuts on others. And that the results, especially in the illustrations, were surprisingly good is amply proved by that picture from the "Ars Moriendi" which depicts the dying man assailed by temptations to impatience. In the same case are two examples of the "Biblia Pauperum," that "Bible of the Poor" which consisted of scenes from the life of Christ and was so popular in the fifteenth century. Another volume of great interest and excellent workmanship is the "Mirabili Romae," an ancient forerunner of Baedeker, for the volume is a guide-book to Rome designed for the use of German pilgrims visiting the Eternal City. This is printed on both sides of the paper and is supposed to have been produced about 1475.

German printing craft dominates the next four cases, which set forth the history of printing in that country from about 1455 to 1532. This, as the visitor will soon discover, is a debatable territory. Those pages of quiet-seeming print, especially the two "Indulgences" and the forty-two-line Bible and the thirty-six-line Bible, have been the occasion of volumes of controversy. It all resolves itself in the end into the question whether printing from movable type is to be placed to the credit of Johann Gutenberg of Mainz, or to that of

Lourens Janszoon Coster of Haarlem, or to someone else unknown. Such hair-splitting is not of momentous interest, but the open page of the forty-two-line Bible, more usually described as the Mazarine Bible, and hence regarded as the first book to be printed in Europe, will have a special appeal for those who recall Hallam's happy simile. "It is a very striking circumstance," noted the historian of the literature of Europe, "that the high-minded inventors of this great art tried at the very outset so bold a flight as the printing of an entire Bible, and executed it with astonishing success. It was Minerva leaping on earth in her divine strength and radiant armour, ready at the moment of her nativity to subdue and destroy her enemies. The Mazarine Bible is printed, some copies on vellum, some on paper of choice quality, with strong, black, and tolerably handsome characters, but with some want of uniformity; which has led, perhaps unreasonably, to a doubt whether they were cast in a matrix. We may see in imagination this venerable and splendid volume leading up the crowded myriads of its followers, and imploring, as it were, a blessing on the new art, by dedicating its first-fruits to the service of Heaven."

Whoever invented movable type, the printers who first employed it were chary of exploiting their own names and careless in not dating their productions. Had they attended to those small details,

what hundreds of volumes need not have been written. Hence the feeling of relief with which the visitor will pass to the third show-case, wherein is exhibited the earliest book inscribed with the name of its printer and the date of publication. This is a Latin Psalter which was produced in Mainz by Fust and Schöffer in 1457. Henceforward the words "about" and "printer unknown" practically disappear, and the student of the printed book feels that he has reached firm land at last. He is free now, at any rate to examine succeeding volumes with a feeling of confidence, and is in a position to form his own conclusions as to whether the art of printing was advancing or degenerating. One thing he can hardly fail to note, and that is that as the matrix cutters became more expert and were able to impart sharper outlines and greater uniformity to their dies, the art of the illustrator became more crude. Some forty years, for example, divided the artist of the "Ars Moriendi" from the illustrator of the Strassburg Æsop, but the work of the latter is rough and primitive compared with that of the former.

Whether Gutenberg is ever conclusively credited with the invention of movable types is hardly of grave importance seeing that he is declared to have "no serious rival for the honour of having brought printing into existence as a practical art." This leaves Germany with the chief laurels, but it must

not be overlooked that the art quickly spread into other lands, and that ere many years had passed printing-presses were busily at work in Italy, France, Holland, Spain, and England. All this is cogently illustrated by the numerous examples displayed in show-cases number six to thirteen.

Among the exhibits in those cases are many notable volumes, including a copy of the first book printed at Venice (1469); the "Hypnerotomachia," the most famous of Venetian illustrated books; the "Virgilius;" which has the distinction of being the first volume printed in italic type; a copy of the first book printed in France; and numerous other rarities. Owing, however, to the frequent newspaper notoriety which is now given to the competition among millionaires for the possession of such Caxtons as come to auction it is probable that the English-speaking visitor will find more to interest him in the show-cases devoted to the typographical achievements of the father of printing in England. That William Caxton is entitled to that honour is beyond dispute, for the story told by Richard Atkyns in favour of transferring that credit to another has been proved "a mere fable." Caxton learned the craft of printing on the Continent and is believed to have printed his first book at Bruges about 1475. This was a translation from the French by the printer himself of Raoul Le Fèvre's "Recueil des histoires de Troye," and is

second in interest only to Caxton's "The Dictes or Sayengis of the Philosophres," to which belongs the unique distinction of being the earliest book printed in England. For in the interval between the two volumes Caxton had returned to his native land and set up his printing-press at Westminster, whence, in 1477, he issued that memorable volume to the world. Of the thirteen copies of this book known to exist an admirable example is displayed in case eleven, side by side with copies of the two books produced by Caxton at Bruges. Keeping them company may also be seen five other Caxtons, including his edition of Chaucer's "Canterbury Tales" and his crudely illustrated version of Æsop's fables. The British Museum possesses no fewer than eighty-four Caxtons, twenty-five of them, however, being duplicates.

Shortly after Caxton had established his press at Westminster the new art began to be practised at Oxford, and in 1480 printers were at work in St. Albans and in the city of London. On Caxton's death in 1491 his business was acquired by his foreman, Wynkyn de Worde, and another printer who quickly came to the front was Richard Pynson. Rare examples of the work of these early craftsmen are shown in cases adjoining the Caxton exhibition. Nor should it be overlooked that in case fourteen, among the specimens of early printing in Scotland, Ireland, and the Colonies, is a copy of John Eliot's

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THE TEMPTATION TO IMPATIENCE. FROM THE "ARS MORIENDI."

no drede ne fere no thynge/ For I ſhalle not accuſe the/ For I ſhalle ſhelue to hym another way/ And as the hunter came/ he demaunded of the ſheepherd yf he had ſene the wulf paſſe/ And the ſheepherd both with the hede and of the eyen ſhewed to the hunter the place where the wulf was / & with the hand and the tongue ſhelued alle the contrarye / And in contynent the hunter vnderſtood hym wel / But the wulf whiche perceyued wel all the fayned maners of the ſheephird fledy albey/ ¶ And within a lytyll whyle after the ſheephird encountred and mette with the wulf/ to whome he ſayd/ paye me of that I haue kepte the ſecrete/ ¶ And thenne the wulf anſwerd to hym in this maner / I thanke thyn handes and thy tongue/ and not thyn hede ne thyn eyen / For by them I ſholde haue ben betrayd/ yf I had not fledde albeye/ ¶ And therfore men muſt not truſte in hym that hath two faces and two tongues/ for ſuche folke is lyke and ſemblable to the ſcorpion/ the whiche enoynteth with his tongue/ and pricketh ſore with his tayle

A PAGE FROM CAXTON'S "ÆSOP."

translation of the Bible into the language of the Massachusetts Indian, this being the first Bible printed in America.

Perhaps, however, among all these priceless treasures there are no volumes of such absorbing interest as those displayed in the fifteenth and sixteenth show-cases. Here are copies of the first edition of the first Prayer Book of Edward VI, the first edition of the Authorized Bible of 1611, the first folio of Shakespeare, and the first editions of "Tottel's Miscellany," Sir Philip Sidney's "An Apologie for Poetrie," Spenser's "The Faery Queene," Bacon's "Essayes," Herrick's "Hesperides," Milton's "Paradise Lost," Izaak Walton's "The Compleat Angler," John Bunyan's "The Pilgrim's Progress," Daniel Defoe's "The Life and strange Surprising Adventures of Robinson Crusoe," Jonathan Swift's "Gulliver's Travels," Oliver Goldsmith's "The Vicar of Wakefield," the "Lyrical Ballads" of Wordsworth and Coleridge, Robert Burns's "Poems, chiefly in the Scottish dialect," Sir Walter Scott's "Waverley," and Alfred Tennyson's "Poems, chiefly lyrical."

What a feast for the book-lover! To be perfectly frank, even he may have been somewhat bored by the contents of the other cases, instructive and invaluable as they are, but now he is in a familiar land, among authors whose names are more than names, among the friends of his world of imagina-

tion. He cares little, perhaps, save in a mildly curious way, that these volumes are first editions; he is not a pundit of title-pages, or a bargainer for volumes just because they are scarce in that particular form. For him the chief and absorbing interest of these books is that they are so many of the contributary rills which have combined to swell the full flood of English literature. Of course they are priceless in money value, and would lead to strenuous conflict of bank-roll against bank-roll were they ever to reach the auction-room, but as the visitor gazes upon those epoch-making volumes his consolation is that, thanks to Gutenberg or someone else, what is of supreme value in those books is available now at a moderate cost.

Not in a mood of envy, then, will he turn to those other half dozen show-cases which are dazzling for their array of costly bindings. Two of these are composed almost entirely of volumes that have once belonged to famous owners. That the kings and queens of England have cherished a preference for handsome bindings is exemplified at every turn, as may be seen by the Bible of Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn, the Petrarch of Katherine Parr, the Greek New Testament of Queen Elizabeth, or the Prayer Book of Charles II. Most of the volumes so luxuriously arrayed would pass Lamb's test. In some respects, he said, the better a book is, the less it demands from binding, such as "Great Nature's

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PRAYER BOOK OF CHARLES II.

Stereotypes," which are eternal though individual copies perish. "But," he added, "where a book is at once both good and rare — where the individual is almost the species, and when *that* perishes,

> We know not where is that Promethean torch
> That can its light relumine, —

such a book, for instance, as the Life of the Duke of Newcastle, by his Duchess, no casket is rich enough, no casing sufficiently durable, to honour and keep safe such a jewel." In supplement to the examples of books bound for English monarchs are some exquisite specimens of Italian and French bindings illustrative of that craft from the fifteenth to the end of the eighteenth century, and a final show-case is devoted to English bindings which were executed for other than royal libraries. That some of the owners of these resplendent volumes gave them such handsome raiment because they treasured their contents is beyond question, for these owners included C. M. Cracherode and Thomas Grenville, but others may have been in the category of that nobleman the presence in whose library of a splendidly bound but worm-eaten volume of Shakespeare prompted Burns to write:

> "Through and through the inspired leaves,
> Ye maggots, make your windings;
> But O, respect his lordship's taste,
> And spare his golden bindings!"

CHAPTER II

AMONG THE MANUSCRIPTS

If it is impossible to allow the general visitor to the British Museum to have free access at will to the department of printed books, how much more impracticable must it be to permit an indiscriminate use of the two departments of manuscripts. Why there should be two departments may puzzle the visitor until he remembers the great disparity which exists between the East and the West, the Occident and the Orient. Manuscripts dealing with the thought of the Orient require for their custody and interpretation knowledge of a different kind from that rendered necessary in connection with the written records of the Occident, and hence the division which gives a separate department to Oriental manuscripts and books. But, so far as the general public is concerned, this division does not exist, for such of the treasures of each department as are deemed suitable for exhibition are on view under equal conditions.

That the manuscripts preserved in the museum should be guarded with jealous care will surprise no one. For one reason why a given book should be the object of safe keeping a dozen reasons might

be adduced in favour of a given manuscript. The written word is far more irreplaceable than the printed word. No printed book can be destroyed. At the time William Tyndale produced his New Testament there was an Archbishop of Canterbury who thought otherwise, and was simple enough to appeal to his bishops for contributions to defray the cost of the copies he had purchased and burnt. Tyndale rejoiced that Providence had raised him up so effectual a helper: "I am glad," he said, "for these two benefits shall come thereof; I shall get money of him to bring myself out of debt, and the overplus of the money that shall remain to me shall make me more studious to correct the said New Testament, and so newly to imprint the same once again." If Horace, long centuries before the printing press was invented, and when the poet had to commit his verse to the precarious custody of papyrus or parchment, could boast that he had reared himself a monument more durable than brass, and could sing,

> "I shall not wholly die. Some part,
> Nor that a little, shall
> Escape the dark Destroyer's dart,
> And his grim festival,"

how much more secure is the record of the author whose thoughts have been given to the printed word. "The press," as Hallam said, "pours forth

in a few days a thousand volumes, which, scattered like seeds in the air over the republic of Europe, could hardly be destroyed without the extirpation of its inhabitants."

With manuscripts the case is entirely different. "The destruction of a few libraries by accidental fire," continues the historian of the Middle Ages, "the desolation of a few provinces by unsparing and illiterate barbarians, might annihilate every vestige of an author, or leave a few scattered copies, which, from the public indifference, there was no inducement to multiply, exposed to similar casualties in succeeding times." Hence the distress of Edward Harley's correspondents when it fell to them to report to that collector the sad fate which had overtaken the Cottonian manuscripts in the fire of 1731. Although the extent of the damage wrought by that fire was overestimated at the time, it is an undeniable fact that the conflagration at Ashburnham House did utterly obliterate many manuscripts of priceless value.

Seeing that the number of those students who can make intelligent use of written records is far fewer than those who can derive benefit from the printed book, it will not surprise the visitor to the British Museum that the departments of manuscripts cannot boast of any apartment comparable with the famous circular Reading-Room. There are special rooms set apart for the use of students

of Occidental and Oriental manuscripts, but they are small apartments and wholly lacking in architectural pretensions. These, however, are not open to the general public; their curiosity is catered for by a number of show-cases arranged in the Grenville Library and in the Manuscript Saloon, the latter being a square apartment at right angles with the Grenville and King's Libraries. The exhibits in the show-cases are supplemented by other remarkable documents displayed in frames attached to the wainscot on either side the entrances to the saloon.

Before, however, the visitor can appreciate to the full the interest and educational value of the numerous papyri, vellum, and paper documents exhibited in the Grenville Library and the Manuscript Saloon, he will need to remind himself of several essential facts. To the modern mind it is exceedingly difficult to realize an age when printing did not exist, and when a book was a totally different thing from the object which now goes by that name. So the inquiring visitor must at the outset recall that in the centuries before the invention of printing, all poetry, all history, all science, all biography, all theology, in fact every form of literature without exception, was produced by hand in a written form, and that it was a laborious matter to provide even half a dozen copies of say the Iliad of Homer or the Psalms of David.

Postulating, then, that man had acquired the art of writing, it needs to be recalled that he was in early ages accustomed to use various kinds of materials as substitutes for that paper now so generally employed. Perhaps his first efforts to give visible form to his thoughts were inscribed on stone, and it is well known that some of the ancient nations were in the habit of writing on clay tablets or tiles. Other materials which have been used at some time or other in the history of the human race have included various metals, the roughly-prepared skins of animals, slabs of wood, palm leaves, the bark of trees, and finally papyrus was discovered and came into general use in the ancient world. The date of that discovery is unknown. The plant from which it was made grew in abundance in the shallows of the Nile and was a notable factor in the industries of ancient Egypt. From its pliant stem boats were made, and rope, and sandals, and mats, and cloth, and, above all, that writing material which has been the means of preserving so much of the knowledge of bygone centuries. Thanks to the description written by Pliny, the method by which papyrus was prepared is fairly clear. When the stem of the plant had been cut into long strips those strips were laid on a board side by side and then crossed with a layer of shorter strips at right angles. These were made to adhere to each other either by some form of paste or by the glutinous material of the plant, the process

being aided by hammering, after which the sheets were placed in the sun to dry. Any roughness was removed by polishing with ivory or a smooth shell. It might be imagined that such material would prove exceedingly perishable, whereas the contrary is the case, for there are in existence papyri dating back more than two thousand years before the Christian era. In fact within recent years it has been seriously proposed to re-introduce the manufacture of papyrus for use as banknotes.

From Egypt the use of papyrus spread far and wide, and it enjoyed a practical monopoly until parchment, or vellum, began to contest its supremacy. That writing material of the past, it will be remembered, takes its name from Pergamum, the capital of Eumenes II, whose efforts to enlarge his library are said to have excited the jealousy of the Ptolemies and led them to forbid the export of papyrus to Pergamum. That story is, however, regarded as little more than a popular explanation of the great development in the manufacture of skins for writing purposes which took place in the second century before Christ. One important result followed from the use of parchment; unlike papyrus, it could be written on both sides, and that convenience prepared the way for the codex and the evolution of the book-form of manuscript. The papyrus was used in a roll-form as contrasted with a number of leaves fastened together. There was a third kind

of writing material in use in ancient Greece and Rome, and that was the wax-covered tablet on which letters were engraved with a pointed stylus or metal instrument. The use of the tablet, however, was practically confined to temporary needs, for school lessons, for example, and hasty memoranda, the stylus being generally provided with a broad end to erase what had been incorrectly written or had served its purpose.

On an ancient Greek vase which reproduces scenes of school-life, two of the writing materials named above are clearly represented. One scene shows the waxen tablet used by the scholar, and another depicts the teacher with a roll of Homer in his hand. The school-boy was not allowed to use papyrus for his lessons, as it was too expensive; hence the wax-covered tablet on which lessons could be as easily written and erased as on the modern slate. In case B in the Manuscript Saloon the visitor will see an actual example of one of these tablets, and will observe with deep interest that it is a relic of the far-off school-days of some Greek lad, for it still preserves the copy of a couple of lines set by a schoolmaster and the efforts of the pupil to emulate his teacher.

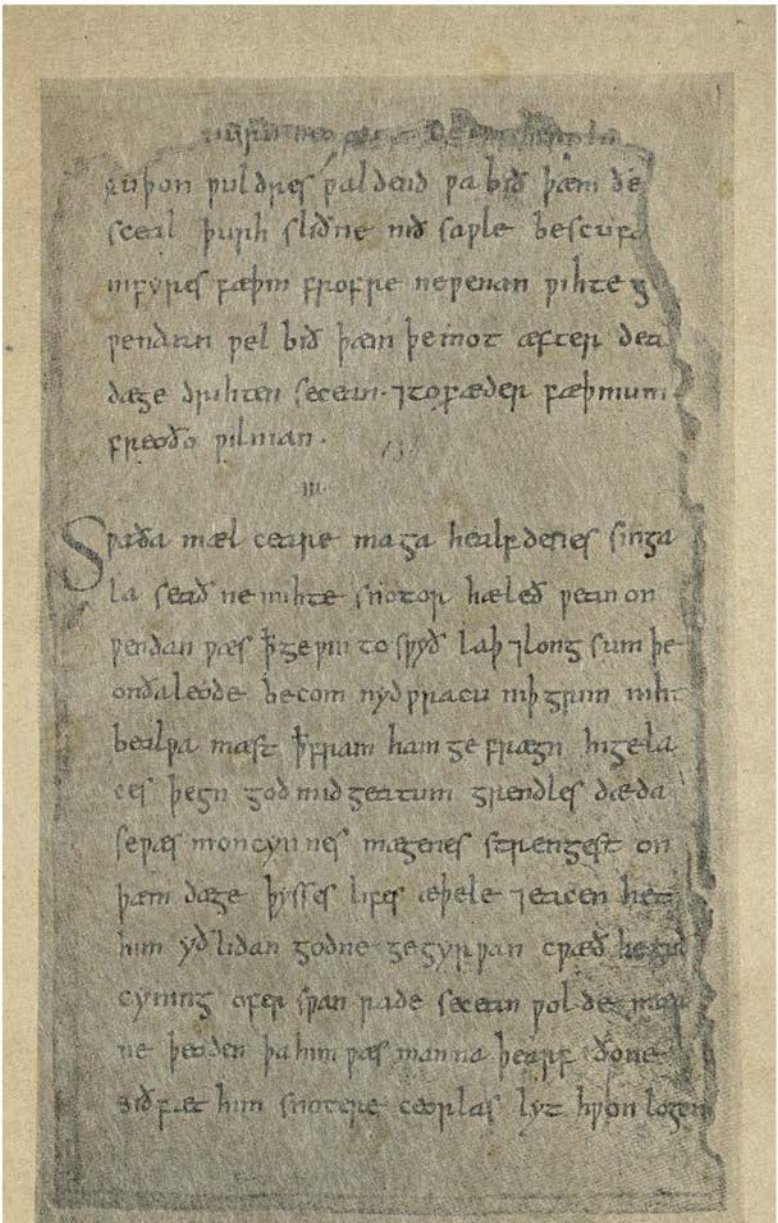
In practical illustration of the foregoing it will perhaps be best for the visitor to seek out first those show-cases which are devoted to classical papyri and parchment manuscripts. The first of these is

that marked A, which is given up to Greek manuscripts. One of these, containing portions of the "Phaedo" of Plato, was written in the third century before Christ, and is regarded as the oldest but one classical Greek manuscript in existence. Near by is the only extant manuscript of Bacchylides, discovered in Egypt in 1896, while in close proximity is the oldest extant manuscript of the Odyssey of Homer. Another remarkable "find" of recent years is that papyrus of Aristotle's work on the constitution of Athens, which has been edited in so scholarly a manner by the present Principal Librarian, Frederic G. Kenyon. In addition to the inherent interest of the documents displayed in this case and in cases B and C and D, it should be noted that the exhibits illustrate the development of handwriting from the uncial style to the cursive or running hand of the present day. They also show how confusing ancient manuscripts are owing to the words being run into each other without those blanks or punctuation marks to which the modern reader is accustomed.

Other Greek manuscripts are shown in case B, but they are on parchment, or vellum, and paper. There are, for example, two leaves of an oration of Demosthenes which, as they belong to the second century, are regarded as the earliest extant vellum manuscript dating from a time when vellum was still regarded as inferior to papyrus. The two next

cases, those marked C and D, are devoted to Latin and other manuscripts and include parts of the Bible and copies of works by Origen, Bede, St. Jerome, Cicero, Juvenal, and many other illustrious writers.

Perhaps, however, the English-speaking visitor will be most attracted by the contents of cases E and F, for these are devoted to English manuscripts and the written chronicles of England. Of supreme interest among the former is the manuscript of Beowulf, the only existing manuscript, written in England, of the oldest poem in the English language. This came to the museum with the Cottonian collection and was one of the volumes injured by the fire of 1731. It was written about the year 1000, on parchment, and now that it is in safe custody will doubtless defy the hand of time for untold centuries. Every student of English literature will respond to Stopford A. Brooke's allusion to this ancient document. "We approach it with a reverence which it deserves for its great age, and with a delight which is born of its association with the history of our people and our poetry. It is a moment of romantic pleasure when we stand beside the long undiscovered sources of an historic river, beside whose waters a hundred famous cities have arisen. It is a moment of the same romantic pleasure when we first look at the earliest upwelling of the broad river of English poetry, and think of the hundred cities



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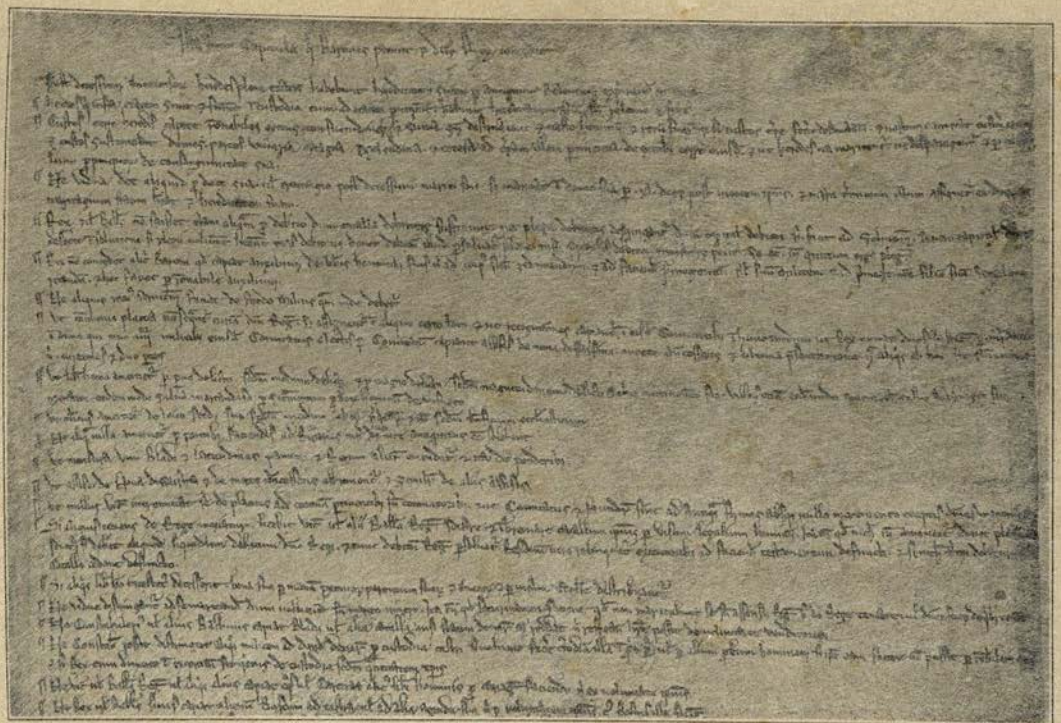
of the imagination that have been built beside its stream."

Keeping Beowulf company are vellum manuscripts of Layamon's "Brut," Langland's "Piers Plowman," Chaucer's "Troilus and Cressida," Gower's "Confessio Amantis," and many another priceless relic of the past. As he bends over these treasures the visitor will be able to in some measure transport himself back into the romantic ages of "ladies dead and lovely knights," to the days of lordly castles and stately chivalry, and as he awakes from his contemplation he may begin to wonder whether he values his printed word as highly as past generations valued that which was written so laboriously.

As an object-lesson in the sources of English history the exhibits displayed in case F are of unique interest. The curious student may often wonder whence the historian derives his information about long-past centuries, how such an one, for example, as John R. Green, is able to paint such glowing pictures of ages so far removed from our own times as those in which the Angles swept down upon Britain and established a new home in that land. Well, the answer is given by the seventeen ancient manuscript chronicles shown in this case. The series starts, not with the history of Gildas, the earliest of British historians, for the museum possesses nothing save a badly charred copy of his chronicle, but

with a copy of the chronicle written by Nennius, composed in the year 858. It gives the history of Britain in Latin from the Roman conquest to the year 687, but is so interwoven with fable that it is of little serious value. Next in order, and of supreme importance, is Bede's history, the copy shown being one of the earliest made, thought to have been written about the end of the eighth century. For the history of the introduction of Christianity into England it is our chief authority. Then follow examples of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, and of the histories written by Wace, and Simon of Durham, and William of Malmesbury, and Henry of Huntingdon, and Hoveden, and several more. Those who are familiar with Carlyle's "Past and Present" should take special note of the chronicle of Jocelin of Brakelonde, for this is the only manuscript in existence of the ancient record from whence Carlyle drew the materials for his fascinating picture of Abbot Samson and his monastery.

After all, however, these chronicles represent but a fraction of the original sources which the historian has to study. In cases five and six the visitor will find many examples of another kind of material for history. Those exhibits, rolls of time-stained parchment covered with unfamiliar handwriting, do not look promising, but to the trained eye they are rich in picturesque or instructive detail. And among them is at least one document which has had far-



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ARTICLES OF MAGNA CHARTA.

reaching influence on human thought. This, of course, is Magna Charta, sought out with feverish eagerness even by the school children, who sometimes throng the Manuscript Saloon. But, to guard against waste of emotion, it may be well to point out that the Articles of Liberties displayed in case five is not an original document, but a collotype copy. Two originals are close at hand in the students' room, and will be shown by the attendant on request. One of those copies will demonstrate more vividly than any other manuscript in the department how seriously some of the Cottonian treasures were damaged by the fire of 1731.

Chronicles and charters, invaluable as they are, form, after all, but the groundwork of history. The contributary sources which must be sought out by the historian are almost endless; statutes, diplomatic correspondence, official reports of generals and admirals, debates in councils and parliaments, political pamphlets, sermons, private diaries and letters, and even such seemingly trivial matters as household accounts. All such sources are carefully hoarded in the department of manuscripts, for the examples actually on view for public inspection are merely fragmentary illustrations of the vast stores hidden from gaze. All told, the department contains over fifty thousand bound volumes of manuscripts, seventy-five thousand charters and rolls, seventeen thousand seals and casts of seals, and

nearly two thousand ancient Greek and Latin papyri.

In view of such a formidable mass of material, who can wonder that even in Isaac Disraeli's days there were historians who were "terrified" at the magnitude of their task? Earlier still some of their number elected the easier method of copying what had been written by their predecessors. Hence the story told by Disraeli. "When Père Daniel undertook a history of France, the learned Boivin, the king's librarian, opened for his inspection an immense treasure of charters, and another of royal autograph letters, and another of private correspondence; treasures reposing in fourteen hundred folios! The modern historian passed two hours impatiently looking over them, but frightened at another plunge into the gulf, this Curtius of history would not immolate himself for his country. He wrote a civil letter to the librarian for his 'supernumerary kindness,' but insinuated that he could write a very readable history without any further aid of such *paperasses,* or 'paper-rubbish.'" And there was another historian who, on being directed to volumes of manuscript material, rejoined that "What was already printed was more than he was able to read."

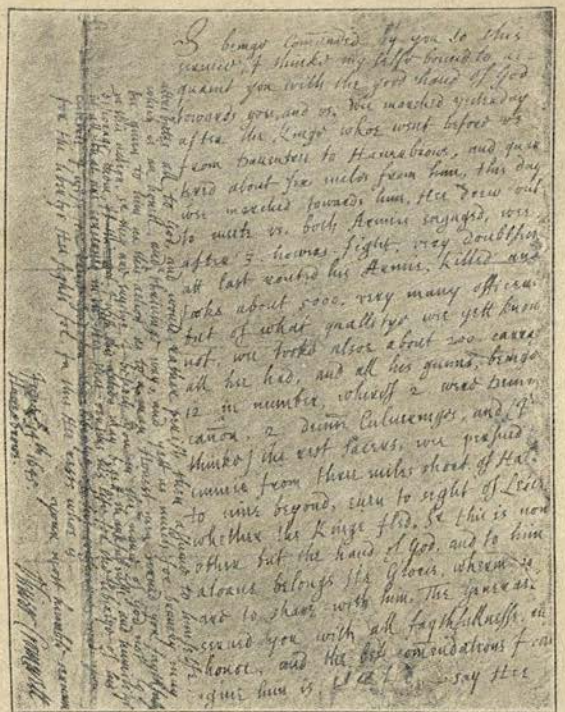
Some idea of what the conscientious historian has to tackle if he would tell the story of England may be gathered from the show-cases briefly de-

scribed above, and the impression will be deepened if the visitor will next turn his attention to the four cases which are on his left and right hand as he enters the Manuscript Saloon. The first of these is given up entirely to a set of royal autographs, which, for one thing, acquaint the visitor with the signatures of English monarchs from Richard II to Queen Victoria. In the case of two of those sovereigns, Charles II and Queen Victoria, the signatures are in early and later forms, the first of Victoria's autographs being a childish effort of printing between those ruled lines which are as necessary apparently for royal as for humbler juveniles. The holograph of the merry monarch is a more advanced effort of penmanship, written in his eighth year, but the ruled lines are still in evidence. And the easy-going nature of the writer can be divined from the few words in which he exhorts his correspondent not to take too much medicine " for it doth alwaies make me worse, and I think it will do the like with you." Apart from their signatures, all these documents have some point of special interest, sometimes a cynical interest in view of the course of history subsequent to the dates at which they were written. Who, for example, can read without a smile the fulsome epistle in which Henry VIII urged his " awne good Cardinall " Wolsey to " take summe pastyme and comfort " from his labours for his royal and " lovyng master? " Anne Boleyn's high spirits

when on the eve of her marriage to Wolsey's master are almost pitifully in evidence in her letter to the cardinal, a letter promising to serve him in any way once she was Henry's wife. Pathetic, too, is the epistle which begins so boldly with "Jane the Queen," and is dated from the Tower in "the first yere of our reign." Not even Cromwell is omitted from the line of English rulers, the Protector being represented by a pious and affectionate letter to his wife. In addition to the English royal autographs there are letters signed by such notable foreign monarchs as Peter the Great, Frederick the Great, and Napoleon.

Other royal autographs take their place in chronological order among the signatures of statesmen, churchmen, and warriors who are represented in cases two, three, and four. The churchmen include Wolsey, Cranmer, Latimer, and Laud; the statesmen number Sir Thomas More, William Cecil, Robert Cecil, John Hampden, John Pym, Sir Robert Walpole, William Pitt, Edmund Burke, Lord Palmerston, Sir Robert Peel, Richard Cobden, the Earl of Beaconsfield and Mr. Gladstone; while the fighting men are represented by Sir Philip Sidney, the commanders of the English fleet against the Armada, Sir Francis Drake, Robert Blake, the Duke of Marlborough, Lord Clive, Nelson, and the Duke of Wellington.

To spend half an hour deciphering the contents



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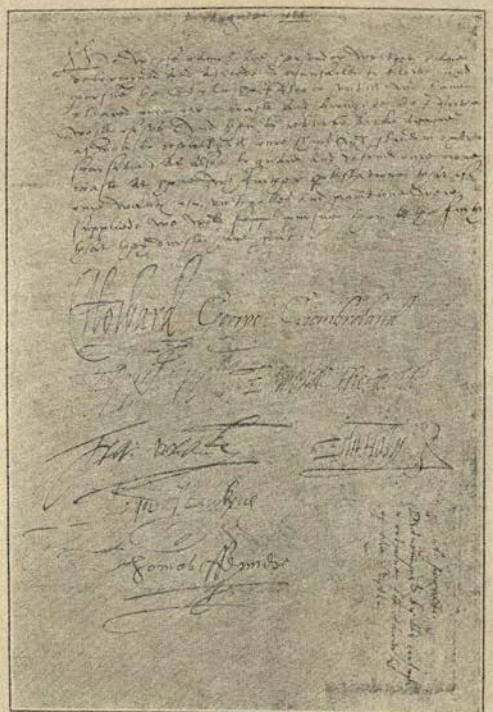
OLIVER CROMWELL'S LETTER.

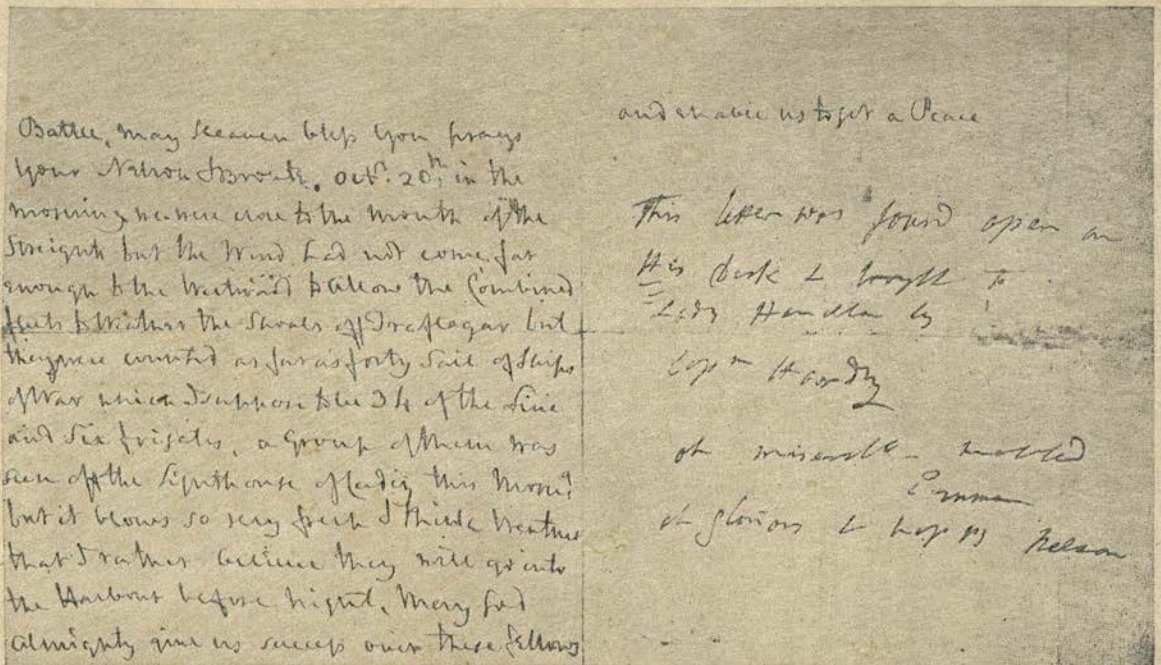


ENGLISH COMMANDERS AGAINST THE ARMADA.

of the manuscripts in these three show-cases is to live through most of the exciting days of English history. Here is Wolsey in the hour of his fall pining for the "pity, compassion, and bounteous goodness" of his uxorious sovereign; Cranmer expressing his pleasure that the king has given his authority that the Bible may be "bought and read within this realm;" Lady Jane Grey announcing her accession to the throne she was to occupy so few days; Mary Queen of Scots complaining to Elizabeth of the rigour of her imprisonment; Lord Burghley sketching in rude fashion the disposal of the hall at Fotheringhay at the trial which sentenced Mary Stuart to death; an eye-witness telling the manner of that death, and how "one of the executioners espied a little dog under her clothes, which could not be gotten forth but by force, yet afterwards would not depart from the dead corpse but came and lay between her head and shoulders;" the sea-dogs of England signing a resolve to "pursue the Spanish fleet until we have cleared our own coasts;" and numerous other actors of great deeds in high stations telling with their own pens the happening of events which are among the glories of English history. Now it is John Hampden writing a few days after the struggle at Edgehill, anon Cromwell gives praise to Heaven for his victory at Naseby, and then comes a change to the diplomatic speech in which Charles II thanked his House of

Commons for its "zeal and affection" in providing him with liberal pocket-money. That termagant of Queen Anne's reign, Sarah Churchill, is here, too, giving an early illustration of that vulgar abuse which is so well developed in a modern member of the family; and later there is the benign figure of George Washington, urging that the principle which should guide the new United States was "to be little heard of in the great world of Politics." Of a date two days before Trafalgar there is a letter from Nelson to his notorious Emma, found on his desk after that triumphant but fatal fight, and endorsed by its recipient, "Oh miserable wretched Emma! Oh, glorious and happy Nelson!" and in fitting company is a carelessly written memorandum in Wellington's autograph of the strength of the cavalry under his command at Waterloo. For climax of the record of battle what could be more fitting than the last page of Gordon's diary written in the ill-fated Khartoum? He knew that the end was near, but he was still master of his fate. "*Now mark this,*" he wrote, "if Expeditionary Force, and I ask for no more than 200 men, does not come in 10 days, *the town may fall,* and I have done my best for the honour of our country."

Memorable indeed are the associations which are suggested by the varied documents which have been hastily passed in review, yet the most inattentive



Battle, may Seamen bless you prays
your Nelson Bronte. Octr. 20th in the
morning we were close to the mouth of the
Straights but the Wind had not come far
enough to the Westward to allow the Combined
fleets to Withdraw the Shoals of Trafalgar but
they were counted as far as forty Sail of Ships
of War which Doubtless the 34 of the Line
and Six frigates, a group of them was
seen off the Lighthouse of Cadiz this Morning
but it blows so very fresh & thick Weather
that I rather believe they will get into
the Harbour before Night. May God
Almighty give us success over these fellows

and enable us to get a Peace

This letter was found open on
His desk & brought to
Lady Hamilton by
Capt Hardy
of mine — sealed
Emma
& given to Capt Hardy Nelson

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NELSON'S LAST LETTER.

visitor to the Manuscript Saloon can hardly fail to notice that while many glances are given to the royal autographs and the battle messages of soldiers and sailors, and the papers of statesmen, the show-cases which are lingered over the longest are those which contain holographs of quite different men. What Nathaniel Hawthorne and Washington Irving found to be true in Poets' Corner in Westminster Abbey is true here. Having left the royal tombs and the tombs of statesmen behind, Hawthorne realized in Poets' Corner a "genial awe, mingled with a sense of kind and familiar presences." He had never felt a similar interest in other tombstones, or been deeply moved by the imaginary presence of other famous dead people. And so it was with Irving. He turned from the resting-places of the men who had filled history with their deeds, and was pleased to observe that, notwithstanding the simplicity of the memorials in Poets' Corner, visitors to the Abbey remained longest in their vicinity. "A kinder and tender feeling takes the place of that cold curiosity or vague admiration with which they gaze on the splendid monuments of the great and heroic. They linger about these as about the tombs of friends and companions; for indeed there is something of companionship between the author and the reader. Other men are known to posterity only through the medium of history, which is continually growing faint and obscure; but the intercourse be-

tween the author and his fellow-men is ever new, active, and immediate."

Two or three of the manuscripts which cannot fail to arouse that sense of companionship are hung in frames on the wainscot, such as the mortgage by "William Shakespeare, of Stratford upon Avon, Gentleman," and a grant in the hand-writing of Edmund Spenser, and the original contract by which one John Milton agreed to dispose the copyright of "A Poem entituled *Paradise Lost,*" to a certain printer for five pounds down and three further payments of five pounds each if the poem reached as many editions. From these the visitor will turn with heightened interest to show-case number seven, and its bewildering wealth of letters. Here is one from John Dryden pleading for "half a yeare of my salary" and urging his "extreme wants" and ill health. "'Tis enough for one age," he concludes, "to have neglected Mr. Cowley and starved Mr. Butler." How different the haughty tone of this epistle from Jonathan Swift, deriding a lady at court for the queen's non-fulfilment of her promise to give him a medal, and laying down with the air of a despot the terms upon which he will now deign to accept a portrait of her Majesty. Something of that resolute spirit, too, breathes from that document signed "Richard Steele" in which the writer avows his determination to try all the processes of the law before he will suffer a certain lord "to

send my children a starving." More courtly, as befitted the man, is Joseph Addison's letter to the secretary of George I, with its assurance that his correspondent would find "a whole nation in the Highest Joy" because of that monarch's accession to the throne of England. How like the man, too, is Boswell's announcement of the early publication of his life of Johnson, "the most entertaining book that ever appeared." And Horace Walpole is surely justified by the wild letter from Thomas Chatterton in reply to remonstrances against his intention of committing suicide: "It is my Pride, my damn'd, native, unconquerable Pride, that plunges me into Distraction." Other literary amenities of the past are recalled by David Hume's letter regretting he ever had any relations with so "pernicious and dangerous a man" as Rousseau, and William Cowper's protest against Dr. Johnson's treatment of Milton, with its famous climax, "Oh! I could thrash his old Jacket till I made his Pension jingle in his pocket." Lamb is in the glorious company, of course, but he is recalled to memory out of his exhibition order by Coleridge's confession that a member of his congregation remarked he would rather hear him "talk than preach." Elia's epistle is a record of one of those "nights out" which gave him so aching a head in the morning. In close proximity is Byron's impassioned refusal to sell his ancestral home of Newstead notwithstanding his pressing need of

money, and that typical epistle is followed by one from Shelley relating to the suppression of his "Laon and Cythna," and a message from Keats to his sister recording the beginning of his fatal illness. To a sister, too, Jane Austen writes of her novel, "Sense and Sensibility," that "I can no more forget it, than a mother can forget her sucking child;" Tennyson complains of his pile of correspondence accumulated during his absence from home; and Browning, in thanking a correspondent for appreciation of his writings, declares: "I can have little doubt but that my writing has been, in the main, too hard for many I should have been pleased to communicate with; but I never designedly tried to puzzle people, as some of my critics have supposed. On the other hand, I never pretended to offer such literature as should be a substitute for a cigar or a game of dominos to an idle man." Of all these letters, however, none has so pathetic an interest as that penned by Dickens the day before he was to cease writing for ever. To a friend whom he was to meet the next day he sent these prophetic lines: "To-morrow is a very bad day for me to make a call, but I hope I may be ready for you at 3 o'clock. If I can't be — why then I sha'n't be."

Before proceeding to those other show-cases which resume the story of English literature the visitor will enjoy spending a few minutes glancing

at the contents of case number eight, where there are letters in Latin, and Italian, and French, and German from such sons of fame as Erasmus, Luther, Calvin, Michelangelo, Ariosto, Galileo, Montaigne, Corneille, Racine, Voltaire, Rousseau, Kant, Goethe, Schiller, Heine, Handel, and Mozart. And in case nine is a unique little collection of volumes which have belonged to royal owners, including Lady Jane Grey's manual of prayers, and the book written by James I for his son, Prince Henry.

On either side of the entrance to the King's Library are those other cases referred to above, in which are exhibited many of the original manuscripts of books which have taken their place as classics in English literature. Here are the only two autographs in existence of dramatists of the Elizabethan age, Ben Jonson's "The Masque of Queenes" and Philip Massinger's "Believe as You List." In the same goodly company is John Milton's commonplace book, and a draft of Samuel Butler's "Hudibras," and Jonathan Swift's closely written "Journal to Stella," and a volume of Pope's translation of Homer, and a corrected draft in Sterne's hand of "The Sentimental Journey," and Edward Gibbon's neatly written manuscript of his autobiography open at the page where he recorded the inception of his famous history. There is a fair copy, too, of the immortal "Elegy" of Thomas Gray, and another of Cowper's "John

Gilpin." Robert Burns is represented by the original manuscript of his autobiography, Byron by the first and second cantos of "Childe Harold," Coleridge by odds and ends in verse and prose, Sir Walter Scott by the manuscript of "Kenilworth," Keats by "The Eve of St. Mark," Macaulay by his article on "Warren Hastings," and Tennyson by his epilogue to the "Idylls of the King."

Inevitably all the manuscripts noted above must appeal with the greatest force to the English-speaking peoples; but there are other treasures in the saloon which break down all national dividing walls and are of supreme interest to all races for whom *the* Book is not only a light to their feet in the narrow path of life but a beacon to the world that is to come. The selection of Biblical manuscripts displayed in cases G and H is small, but it illustrates in a singularly attractive manner the textual history of the Scriptures and enables the visitor to see with his own eyes several of the earliest and most priceless manuscripts in existence. The vellum volume of the Pentateuch, for example, is thought to be the oldest manuscript in existence of any considerable part of the Bible in Hebrew, while the volume of the famous Codex Alexandrinus is one of the three earliest copies of the complete Bible, and dates from the middle of the fifth century. There are several other Greek manuscripts of portions of the Scriptures, some in Syriac, others in Greek and

Coptic, and numerous examples of Latin versions. From these to versions more nearly approaching the English of to-day is a natural transition, illustrated by an eleventh-century Anglo-Saxon version of the Gospels and a fourteenth-century copy of Wycliffe's complete English Bible. As a remarkable specimen of a Biblical manuscript written on English soil the wonderful Lindisfarne Gospels should not be overlooked. This is regarded as the most perfect existing example of the Celtic style of ornamentation and is remarkable for its impeccable condition, it being exceedingly difficult to believe that it was written so long ago as the seventh century.

Belonging as it does to the category of illuminated manuscripts, the last named exhibit would, had it not been for its rare quality, have taken its place in one or other of the nine show-cases in the Grenville Library specially devoted to such treasures. The word "illumination" in connection with manuscripts has come to be interpreted as meaning decoration, but the old monks and other artists who lavished so much skill on Biblical and liturgical manuscripts had another purpose than that of mere adornment in view. As Ruskin pointed out, "the drawings in Saxon manuscripts, in which, better than in any other remains of their life, we can read the people's character, are rapid endeavours to express for themselves, and convey to others, some likeness of the realities of sacred event in which they

have been instructed. . . . A Saxon monk would scratch his idea of the Fall of the angels or the Temptation of Christ over a whole page of his manuscript in variously explanatory scenes, evidently full of inexpressible vision, and eager to explain and illustrate all that he felt or believed." Yet elsewhere, such was the contradictory nature of the man, Ruskin declared that "perfect illumination is only writing made lovely; the moment it passes into picture-making it has lost its dignity and function." No one can examine the many and beautiful examples in these show-cases without seeing that illumination did pass into picture-making, but in the majority of cases those pictures may surely have been an attempt to expound, to "illuminate" the text, as sincere as the earlier and cruder efforts which won Ruskin's approval.

Exactly when the writers of manuscripts began to adorn their pages with borders, with initial letters, with outline drawings, and then with miniatures, is unknown; the earliest surviving examples are believed to date from the third century. They, however, are adornments of a secular text, Homer to wit, and thus belong to an age when the spirit of Christianity was still almost antagonistic to art. "Cursed be all who paint pictures" is a sentiment inscribed largely in the writings of the early fathers of the Church, and it was not until Christianity became a state religion that it abandoned that atti-

The Eve of Saint Mark. 1819

~~It was on a twice holy day~~
~~'Twice holy was the sabbath day bell~~
Upon a sabbath day it fell
Twice holy was the sabbath bell;
That call'd the folk to evening Prayer.
The City streets were clean and fair
From wholesome drench of autumn rains
And on the western window panes
The chilly sunset ~~blazed~~ faintly told
Of unmatured green valleys cold
Of the green thorny bloomless hedge
Of rivers new with spring tide sedge
Of Primroses by sheltered rills
And daisies on the aguish hills.
Twice holy was the sabbath bell:
The silent streets were crowded well
With staid and pious companies
Warm from their fireside oratories;
And since morning mass had been
To vesper song and vesper prayer

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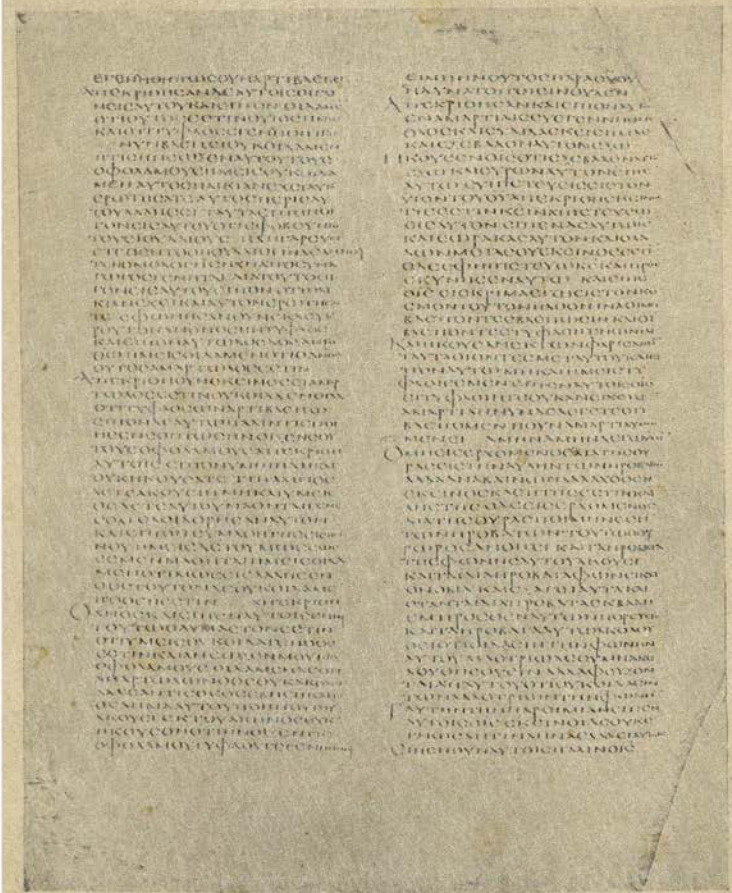
JOHN KEATS' "EVE OF ST. MARK."



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CODEX ALEXANDRINUS.

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APOCALYPSE OF FOURTEENTH CENTURY.

tude of hostility. Dr. Muther has asserted that "the miniature painting of the Irish, Gallic, and German monks was less painting than calligraphy," and hints that the human figures eventually introduced were nothing more than the development of scrolls and flourishes, but most of the examples shown in the Grenville Library are far removed from such an ancestry. In the first case there are seven manuscripts representative of the Byzantine School, all, with one exception, portions of the Bible. The remaining exhibits in that case and in cases number two and three are English manuscripts, dating from the tenth to the fifteenth century. The open pages display not only a marvellous wealth of decorative effect, borders of flowers and birds and insects, and initial letters of exquisite design and colouring, but also carefully finished miniatures and drawings of high artistic merit. In the second case, for example, there is a manuscript of the Apocalypse which is remarkable for the spirit of its illustrations and the delicacy of its colouring. And the initials shown in the third case are of exceptional beauty. In addition to the numerous examples of the English school of decoration, there are manuscripts representing kindred work done in France, Germany, and Italy. And to complete this attractive exhibition there is one case filled with volumes illustrating the superb manner in which manuscripts were bound in the tenth to the sixteenth

centuries. These handsome books, studded with all kinds of ornaments, including figures in relief in silver-gilt and rubies and turquoises, indicate that the modern revival in favour of splendid bindings has a severe task in attempting to rival the achievements of ages supposed to be far less advanced in the arts than these later centuries.

CHAPTER III

RELICS OF GREECE AND ROME

WHEN the visitor to the British Museum turns to that department which is concerned with the civilization of ancient Greece and Rome he will find himself not only freed from all restrictions in the examination of those rare treasures, but also bewildered by the wealth of objects displayed for his instruction. The two previous chapters have made it clear that so far as printed books and manuscripts are concerned a few galleries exhaust all that can be seen save by those holding students' tickets; but the department which has now to be considered spreads itself through no fewer than twenty-one rooms, many of them of spacious dimensions. All these rooms are open to the public, not excepting that in which the rare and invaluable gold ornaments and gems are displayed.

For all the passion and eloquence with which he was wont to expatiate upon the glories of Greek art, Ruskin once took it for granted that that art "bored" his readers and hearers. "You know it does," he affirmed, and went on to explain that the reason was because people were always being forced to "look in it for something that is not

there." With all deference to the great critic, that is hardly the last word. If the richly-stored galleries of Greek and Roman antiquities fail to arouse living interest in their visitors it is because they approach them in an unprepared state of mind and wander through them in a haphazard manner. Given the proper mental preparation and a determination to take the rooms in their right sequence, there is no reason why Byron's exalted experience should not be shared by every visitor. What he sang of Greece itself is true of the galleries where "the glory that was Greece" is fully as much in evidence as among the plains and cities of that storied land.

"Where'er we tread, 'tis haunted, holy ground;
No earth of thine is lost in vulgar mould,
But one vast realm of wonder spreads around,
And all the Muse's tales seem truly told,
Till the sense aches with gazing to behold
The scenes our earliest dreams have dwelt upon:
Each hill and dale, each deepening glen and wold,
Defies the power which crushed thy temples gone:
Age shakes Athena's tower, but spares gray Marathon."

Amazing as it may seem, there are actually people in this twentieth century who stoutly deny that the modern world is in any sense indebted to ancient Greece! When it is remembered that it is impossible to pass along almost any street of any city, to gaze upon any public building and espe-

cially our churches and halls without encountering that debt, and that in sculpture and literature Athens is still the "mother of the arts," the business of arguing with such unbelievers seems a hopeless task. To approach these galleries in such a frame of mind can but result in that sense of boredom to which Ruskin referred.

But Ruskin himself has supplied one suggestion of inestimable value for all who would win from these marbles and vases and gems their ever-living lessons of beauty and truth. He has reminded us that the nine centuries before Christ can be divided into three groups of three centuries each, expressed as an A. B. C. Thus A. stands for "Archaic" and covers the ninth, eighth, and seventh centuries; B. for "Best" and includes the sixth, fifth, and fourth centuries; and C. stands for "Corrupt," and is applied to the third, second, and first centuries. No doubt the modern mind, accustomed to add to years in estimating chronology, will find it a little puzzling to be always subtracting years, but the process is not so difficult as it seems on the surface, and can soon be mastered at the expense of a little thought. It is true, also, that the researches of recent years have materially extended in a backward direction the period of the Archaic, but, for practical purposes, Ruskin's A. B. C. will answer the needs of all save the special student of archæology.

And there is one more fact which needs to be kept in mind. In those nine centuries before the Christian era the central point of time is of course the fifth century, and it is suggestive to recollect that that was the century of the battle of Marathon. Now it will be within the memory of all that in Sir Edward S. Creasy's "The Fifteen Decisive Battles of the World" the struggle which took place on the memorable plain of Attica comes first on the list. That pre-eminence was inevitable. Of course there can be no ignoring the importance of the subsequent conflicts of Greeks and Persians at Salamis and elsewhere, but they do not rank in the same category with Marathon. "The day of Marathon is the critical epoch in the history of the two nations. It broke for ever the spell of Persian invincibility, which had paralyzed men's minds. It generated among the Greeks the spirit which beat back Xerxes, and afterwards led on Xenophon, Agesilaus, and Alexander, in terrible retaliation, through their Asiatic campaigns. It secured for mankind the intellectual treasures of Athens, the growth of free institutions, the liberal enlightenment of the Western world, and the gradual ascendency for many ages of the great principles of European civilization."

But the victory of Marathon in 490 B. C. did something for Greece, too. It accentuated that Pan-Hellenic feeling, that consciousness of unity, that

necessity to make common cause against a common foe, that identity of race which had never been wholly dormant even during the centuries when the various states of Greece had fought with each other with that tenacity which always distinguishes family quarrels. For that tiny peninsula of Greece, it will be remembered, consisted, apart from its numerous littoral islands, of two countries in the North, eleven countries in the central division of the land, and other eleven countries in the South. Even that subdivision, however, and the constant wars between the small states, did not entirely obliterate the community of feeling referred to above; what was needed to make it a vital factor in the life of the people as a whole was that common danger which was supplied by the invasions of Persia. And from the united effort with which those invasions were repelled there grew that keen realization of pride in nationality out of which great literature and art are born. It is impossible not to recall the parallel case of England, where, out of the ever-pressing dangers of Spanish invasion, there came to birth that pride of race, that heightened feeling of robust confidence which had issue in Elizabethan literature. Hence when, nearly ten years after Marathon, the Persian danger threatened Greece once more, there took place that general congress at the Isthmus, a new feature in Greek history, which settled the internal quarrels of the

states and united all Greece against the Persians and ended for ever their attempts at conquest.

From such a triumph, giving to the victors a sense of power and exaltation, the great period of literature and art was born, and hence Ruskin's insistence upon the fifth century B. C. as that which marked the apex of Greek achievement.

Not that there had not been art before Marathon; and not that there was not art after the fifth century; but that what went before was hesitating and crude and marked by alien influence, and that what came after reflected that weakening of the national spirit which finally prepared the way for the conquest by Rome. But, in the height of those good days, Athens became the most splendid of Greek cities, the chosen home of all who excelled in the arts. "Cimon and Pericles vied with each other in beautifying the city of their birth; and the encouragement which the latter especially gave to talent of every kind, collected to Athens a galaxy of intellectual lights such as is almost without a parallel in the history of mankind."

Beside bearing in mind such facts as the foregoing, the explorer of the galleries devoted to Greek and Roman remains will be well advised to traverse those galleries in their chronological order. This, unfortunately, is not the order in which the rooms are arranged. Much has been done to facilitate the chronological study of the relics, but as

constant additions are being made, and as those accessions naturally represent various periods, it would be impossible to preserve a direct sequence without disturbing all the galleries every time a new object was acquired. In view of that situation, the visitor should ignore for the time being that Hall of Greek and Latin Inscriptions which can hardly fail to arrest his attention directly he enters the museum, and also resist the temptation to examine the busts in the Roman Gallery which is immediately to the left of the entrance, leaving both these for examination in their proper place. He must, however, pass through the Roman Gallery, and also through the three galleries in continuation in order that he may start at the beginning, that is, in the Archaic Room.

And one other suggestion may not be out of place. We are all liable to seek out first those objects the beauty and interest of which have been insisted upon by every critic and advertised in countless photographs. It is a common experience in any of these galleries to observe visitors entering and making straight for one given object, ignoring all the rest, and spurning to allow that one special piece of sculpture the opportunity of fitting itself into an ordered study of its companions. That is the path to chaos and boredom. Rather should the visitor go his rounds in the spirit of the discoverer, with open mind, intent upon examining and ponder-

ing for himself. If, in the end, he finds that his appreciation coincides with the general verdict he will be fortified in his taste; if he discovers beauties which other eyes have not seen and which have not been proclaimed from the housetops, he will enjoy a pleasure of a unique kind, a pleasure akin to that which fell to the lot of Richard Jefferies when, one day in the Louvre, he lighted upon that Stooping Venus which gave him more joy than all the other treasures of that famous museum.

Here, then, in the Archaic Room is the right starting-point, the gallery which discloses the origins as it were of Greek sculpture. Taking the objects in the order in which they are numbered it will be found that the first place has been given to some sculptures from Mycenæ and Crete, which are of uncertain age, but are certainly prior to the eighth century before the Christian era. Here are fragments from the Doorway of the Treasury of Atreus, which show how the earliest craftsmen in stone were contented with adorning their work with simple decorative patterns, reluctant as yet to attempt either the human figure or the forms of animals. Even when the artist did soar higher and tackle the human form, his efforts, as will be seen in the first specimens in the Room of Terracottas, were exceedingly crude, strikingly akin to those paste cats and mice which Ruskin's little girl friend manufactured when she was allowed to exchange

the school-room for the kitchen. For there is "no other true account of the spirit of sculpture than that it is an irresistible human instinct for the making of cats and mice." From the decorative doorway to the sculptures from Branchidæ is a distinct advance, for now the artist is dealing with the human figure and animal form, but dealing with them in a heavy and conventional manner. His 'prentice hand, too, is revealed in the frieze of Satyrs and Animals which came from the Acropolis at Xanthos, for here there is a strange lack of proportion, due to the fact that the sculptor cannot yet estimate distances and their relations. There is more vitality, however, and a greater command over material, in the frieze of Cocks and Hens.

Various periods and different districts are represented by the sculptures from Naucratis and Rhodes, the casts from Selinus, and numerous scattered fragments, but the most striking objects in the room are the Harpy Tomb and the casts of sculptures from Aegina. The former, which is estimated to be one of the "most important and elaborate works of archaic art" extant, consists of the four reliefs which have been taken from the parapet of the famous Harpy Monument at Xanthos. The name of the tomb is derived from the harpies, or "snatchers," seen on two sides and depicted as carrying off a small figure, thought to represent the human soul. One relief has for its subject two

enthroned women to whom three other women are bringing offerings; another is of a venerable man receiving a crested helmet from a youthful warrior; the third portrays another aged man on a throne, to whom a boy is presenting a cock; and the fourth shows an enthroned figure to whom an attendant is offering a dove. But the meaning of all this no one can expound. Plenty of theories have been broached, including a suggestion that the sculptures represent Homer's story of the rape of the daughters of Pandareos, but no agreement has been reached. It is, however, fairly well established that the tomb belongs to the middle of the sixth century, and it can be seen by all that the sculptor had attained considerable skill in working out the details of his scheme. But his figures have no pliability; they bespeak the hand of a man lacking in confidence.

In justice to those long-dead artists there is, however, one thing which should be constantly kept in mind. Neither the reliefs from the Harpy Tomb, nor most of the sculptures in this and the other galleries, were intended to be seen at such close quarters as the exigencies of space in the museum make necessary. This applies to the casts of Sculptures from the Temple of Aegina despite the fact that they are further removed from the vision by being arranged on the south and north walls of the Archaic Room. The originals of these figures were

excavated a century ago, and once adorned the west and east pediments, or gables, of that temple which is situated in the northern corner of the island. It seems to be agreed that the subjects are representative of contests between the Greeks and Trojans, the central figure in each composition being that of Athenè, who, to tell truth, seems somewhat indifferent to the struggles taking place on either side of her. Some three-quarters of a century divide this work from that of the Harpy Tomb, and the most casual inspection will show how great an advance had been made in the interval. Instead of stiff, doll-like human figures, we have a band of warriors instinct with movement, and the details of drapery, arms, and armour reveal a sure advance in mastery. The visitor must, however, remember that he is still in the A. division of Ruskin's A. B. C., even though these sculptures belong to the latest period of Greek archaic art.

But, on leaving the Archaic Room, he must be prepared for a remarkable efflorescence of genius. If he will pause for a few minutes in the ante-room to ponder the Cnidos Demeter he will, in a measure, be prepared for what is to follow. The sculptor may well have intended, as is supposed, to represent the goddess mourning the loss of her daughter Persephonè, for her face is suffused with a pensive melancholy, as though she could still hear the distant echo of her child's voice. There is, too, about

the figure an atmosphere of maternity in harmonious keeping with her character as the earth-mother.

Although the ante-room gives entrance to the Ephesus Room, the visitor's immediate goal is the gallery further north, namely that Elgin Room which for nearly a century has been perhaps the chief attraction of the British Museum. The marbles in this room represent "the most marvellous phenomenon in the whole history of art," that is, the swift progress made by Greece in the fifth century in the mastery of sculpture. "As in literature the fifth century takes us from the rude peasant plays of Thespis to the drama of Sophocles and Euripides; as in philosophy it takes us from Pythagoras to Socrates; so in sculpture it covers the space from the primitive works made for the Peisistratidae to some of the most perfect productions of the chisel." The rare beauty of these marbles was glowingly eulogized by that Parliamentary committee which, in 1816, advocated their purchase with national funds. "The testimony of several of the most eminent artists in this kingdom, who have been examined," so ran the report of the committee, "rates these marbles in the very first class of ancient art. . . . They speak of them with admiration and enthusiasm: and notwithstanding the manifold injuries of time and weather, and those mutilations which they have sustained from the fortuitous, or designed injuries of neglect, or mis-

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THE DEMETER OF CNIDOS.

chief, they consider them as among the finest models, and the most exquisite monuments of antiquity." Some fifty years later Ruskin re-echoed that tribute in another form when he told his students: "If you were for some prolonged period to study Greek sculpture exclusively in the Elgin Room of the British Museum, and were then suddenly transported to the Hôtel de Cluny, or any other museum of Gothic and barbarous workmanship, you would imagine the Greeks were the masters of all that was grand, simple, wise, and tenderly human, opposed to the pettiness of the toys of the rest of mankind." Between those two eulogiums, and since the date of the last, the anthology of praise has been unbroken.

Inasmuch as the Marbles have of necessity to be arranged around the inside of the gallery instead of around the outside, thus reversing their original position, the first step toward a proper appreciation is to study carefully the model of the Parthenon at the north end of the room. And, if the visitor desires to gain a clear idea of the position of that famous temple, he should also give some attention to the model of the Acropolis on which it was built.

Of course it will be remembered that Pericles was the moving spirit in that adornment of the rocky mass of the Acropolis in which the scheme for the erection of the Parthenon took the leading place.

Plutarch has told us that " that which was the chief delight of the Athenians and the wonder of strangers was the magnificence of the temples and public edifices; " and among those structures none could compare with the Parthenon, reared in honour of the goddess Athenè, who as the virgin was emphatically Parthenos. It was begun about the year 447 B. C. and is supposed to have been completed some twelve years later. The architect was Ictnos, but it was to Pheidias that the adornment of the building was entrusted. As the model will show, the temple was fashioned in the Doric style, and was surrounded by a colonnade consisting of eight columns at each end and fifteen columns on either side; had an interior shrine, or cella, for the reception of the statue of Athenè; and measured two hundred and twenty-five feet in length, one hundred feet in breadth, and some forty-five feet in height. The statue of Athenè, which was of gold and ivory, has completely disappeared; but some idea of its aspect may be gained from the three casts of statuettes of the goddess displayed in the room.

In examining the model of the Parthenon it will be observed that the temple had two pediments, one at the east end and the other at the west; that around the parapet under the cornice there was a series of metopes; and that around the top of the central chamber of the temple there ran a frieze in low relief. Hence these three different parts of

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ELGIN MARBLES: THE THREE FATES.

the building enabled Pheidias to display three kinds of sculpture: that is, figures in the round, figures in very high relief, and figures in low relief. All the work was carried out in the famous Pentelic marble, and was planned and executed under the direction of the most illustrious sculptor of the ancient world.

What has been told in a previous chapter of the history of the Elgin Marbles will have prepared the visitor for their fragmentary condition. Perhaps the greatest havoc has been wrought on the sculptures of the two pediments, but the parts which have survived are arranged in so admirable a manner that it is not difficult to realize what a revelation they were to European artists when they were first rescued. The remains of the eastern pediment are displayed on a raised platform in what has been conjectured to be Pheidias's original order, the subject of the entire composition being the birth of Athenè. Unfortunately all the central figures were destroyed long ago, and there is considerable doubt as to the identification of the portions that have survived. These include, however, the two horses of Helios, seen on the extreme left, a figure supposed to represent Theseus, then two seated female figures which may be Persephonè and Demeter, next to whom is Iris, and then there is a great blank till we come to the "Three Fates," and the marvellous horse's head which Goethe praised for

its combination of natural truth with the highest poetical conception. The Theseus was once selected by Ruskin as embodying the whole end and aim of the Athenian school, "the natural form of the human body;" while the "Three Fates" are so majestic in their ruin, so unique for the delicacy and transparency of their drapery, so full of vitality even in their repose, that the most indifferent must respond to their appeal.

More fragmentary still are the relics from the western pediment, also shown on a raised platform and grouped in accordance with the latest scholarship, the subject of which was the strife between Poseidon and Athenè for the dominion of Attica. There is one figure, however, which fully justifies Shelley's assertion that these fragments are "the despair of modern art." Who this headless sculpture, reclining at the left of the pediment, is intended to represent, is undecided, but that is of no importance compared with the triumphant manner in which the impliable stone has been made to take on the seeming of yielding flesh, so that, were it not for the forbidding "Visitors are requested not to touch the sculptures," one would expect the pliant-looking thigh to give to the pressure of one's hand. Who can be surprised, then, that "this figure has been long and deservedly celebrated for the perfection of its anatomy?"

Out of the ninety-two metopes which adorned the

Parthenon the Elgin Marbles include fifteen originals. These are in the highest possible relief, and depict various phases of that conflict between the Centaurs and Lapiths which, according to the old legend, disturbed the harmony of the wedding feast of King Peirithoos. They are of unequal merit, with touches here and there of archaic influence, but several are so spirited in feeling and so finished in execution as to make them worthy of the great temple they once adorned.

Notwithstanding the supreme interest and beauty of the relics from the pediments and the vigour of the metopes, it is probable that all save artists will find most to delight them in the panels of the Parthenon frieze which are placed on the walls of the gallery. For one thing, they are more perfect. On the temple itself the entire length of the frieze extended to five hundred and twenty-four feet, and of that total the Elgin Marbles include nearly two hundred and fifty feet of the original sculptures and another hundred and seventy feet in casts. Various theories have been formulated as to the general subject of this exquisite series of low reliefs, but that which has most in its favour is that the theme of the sculptors was the Panathenaic Procession at Athens held in honour of Athenè as the guardian deity of the Acropolis. Such a subject, so congenial to that love of stately procession for which the Athenians were noted, provided Phei-

dias and his assistants with an incentive to exert their powers to the utmost, with the result of enriching humanity with the most beautiful band of low relief sculpture the world has ever known.

While students of archæology will doubtless continue to dispute for all time as to the exact meaning of this section or the other, it will be obvious even to the uninstructed that the frieze depicts a series of well-defined episodes, such as the making ready of the procession, the march of noble maidens, the slower movement of aged citizens, the hurrying of chariots, the prancing of horses, and the quiet sedateness of the godlike presence in which the procession comes to an end. When Keats saw the Elgin Marbles for the first time he confessed to an inability to put his thoughts into words, but as one gazes upon that part of the frieze which shows the passing along of the sacrificial animals it is impossible not to feel that the poet had these in mind when he asked:

> "Who are these coming to the sacrifice?
> To what green altar, O mysterious priest,
> Lead'st thou that heifer lowing at the skies,
> And all her silken flanks with garlands drest?"

Never, too, has marble so responded to the touch of genius as in that division of the frieze where the Greek spirit of repose is so marvellously portrayed in the ease with which Athenian youths are holding

in restraint the quivering, vivacious steeds on which they are mounted. "While the horses bound and prance with a fiery impatience which seems at every moment ready to break loose from all control, their irregular movements never disturb the even hand and well-assured seat of the riders, as the cavalcade dashes along like a torrent."

In passing from pediment to metope, and from metope to frieze, it is hardly possible to overlook the fact that while the male figures are either in the nude or are only half-clothed, those of women are either completely swathed in a garment of many folds, as in the case of the Demeter, or are arrayed in material which though almost diaphanous yet removes the figures from the category of the nude. The reason for this was partly climatic. Under the balmy sky of Greece it was no hardship for youths and men to go lightly clad all the year, and during the athletic games which entered so largely into their lives it was their custom to contest with each other entirely naked. Hence the nude male was a familiar sight in Athens and other cities, and it is notable that it is the nude rather than the naked which is suggested by the sculptures of the Parthenon. There is nothing of the grossness of the unclothed body which the photograph gives, or is so offensive in some modern sculptures. The women of Greece, however, were evidently always clad, because, as Ruskin has pointed out, the typical

woman of the race, Venus, "has power only over lawful and domestic love." The same observing critic has also noted that the Greek Venus is conspicuous for her broad and full breasts, the sign, with the emblems usually associated with her, that "her essential function is child-bearing." This is fully illustrated by the female figures of the Elgin Marbles, and, indeed, by most of the Greek sculptures in the British Museum, all of which are remarkable for their ample bosoms, plainly indicated through the flimsy drapery which the sculptors handled with such consummate skill as to portray while still hiding the form.

Among the other contents of the Elgin Room the visitor should note the casts taken from the monument of Lysicrates at Athens, if only for the fact that they recall the custom which made individual wealthy members of the community responsible for dramatic performances. Lysicrates was one of those who bore the expense of providing a chorus for a dramatic performance, and by that generous deed has attained an immortality beyond anything he could have anticipated. Perhaps this will encourage millionaire patrons of New Theatre and other dramatic enterprises.

There are also some interesting casts from the temple of Theseus at Athens, which is thought to have been built earlier than the Parthenon; and at the south end of the gallery are two arrestive

heads, one of Pericles and the other believed to represent Asclepios. The latter is certainly worthy of the god of the healing art, benign and almost professional-looking; the former is at least notable for the manner in which it illustrates the idealizing tendency of Greek portraiture in marble. If Pericles were really as handsome as this marble presentment it is not difficult to understand the infatuation of Aspasia; but while he may have been remarkable for the grave beauty of his features, it is highly probable that the sculptor followed the Greek manner of softening all individual traits, without quite losing the likeness, in his endeavour to maintain that idealism characteristic of his race. Plutarch informs us that while the person of Pericles was in other respects well turned, "his head was disproportionately long," and that, consequently, in all his statues, his head was covered with a helmet, as in the present example.

Through the door at the north end of the Elgin Room the visitor can pass into the Phigaleian Room, where are displayed some remains of the Temple of Apollo at Phigaleia, and of the Temple of Wingless Victory, and also numerous votive and sepulchral reliefs. The frieze of the first-named is happily complete, and as it was intended for an internal decoration, in distinction from that of the Parthenon, it is exhibited in the manner in which it adorned the temple for which it was executed.

Here again one of the subjects is the struggle between the Centaurs and the Lapiths, the other theme relating to the hostility of the Greeks and Amazons.

Turning to the sepulchral reliefs it will be found that they are of three kinds, that is, either a simple tablet with an ornamental finish; or a tablet bearing a scene from daily life; or vases sculptured in the round or in relief. The first are akin to those modern memorials to the dead in which pious grief has to be content with a simple inscription and such carved emblem as the common resources of monumental masons can provide; the second are the forerunners of the more ornate tombs of the wealthy. And yet, somehow, they make modern tombs seem common by contrast. For the reliefs are generally distinguished by that "nothing too much" which was the Greek rule in death as well as in life. Yet the pictures of "the daily round, the common task" sculptured on these memorials have a wistful pathos of their own. Here is one in which a woman of rare charm is putting off a bracelet while her maid holds open her jewel-box to receive it, as though suggesting that the time for all such adornment is passed. And here is another where the dead woman is relinquishing a necklace to her servant. Or on a vase may be seen a pathetic group of two women clasping hands as though for the final farewell, while on either side are a girl

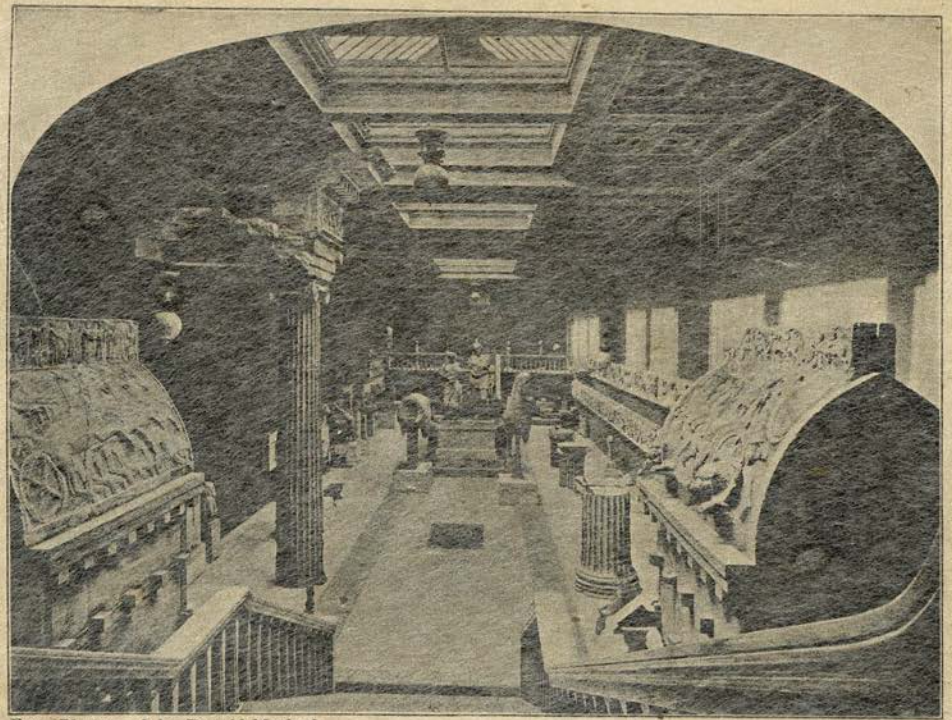
and a boy dissolved in tears. Instinctively one recalls a tender farewell from the Greek Anthology:

"I, Homonœa, who was far clearer-voiced than the Sirens, I who was more golden than the Cyprian herself at revellings and feasts, I the chattering bright swallow lie here, leaving tears to Atimetus, to whom I was dear from girlhood; but unforeseen fate scattered all that great affection of childbirth. How old? Two-and-twenty. And childless? Nay, but I left a three-year-old Calliteles — may he live at least and come to a great old age. And to thee, O stranger, may Fortune give all prosperity."

Death rather than life is the predominant note of the two rooms which should be visited next in order, that is, the Nereid and Mausoleum Rooms. The first is reached by a door in the middle of the Elgin gallery, and is given up to a model of and fragments from the Nereid Monument which was discovered at Xanthos in Lycia in 1842. It is thought that the monument was the tomb of a prince, and it takes its name from the Nereids which stood between the columns of the upper portion of the tomb. "Stood" is hardly the correct word. Even in their sadly mutilated condition these sculptures of those sprightly nymphs of the sea, the forerunners of the mermaids of more modern times, seem, it has been said, "to be scudding along the surface of the waves." Their thin drapery is blown closely to their beautiful forms, that touch of the

sculptor's art accentuating the sense of swift movement. There is a model of the monument in the room, from which the visitor can gain a fairly accurate idea of the positions occupied by the four friezes, one of which shows a battle between Greeks and barbarians, while another sets forth various phases in an assault on a town from the sortie to the surrender.

On the north side of the Nereid Room is a staircase which leads down into the Mausoleum Room, where are displayed the remains of that tomb of Mausolus, the Prince of Caria, from which the word mausoleum has been derived. Dying about 350 B. C., the Prince of Caria, an ancient district of Asia Minor, was succeeded by Artemisia, who was his sister as well as his wife. Notwithstanding that Mausolus was an avaricious ruler, caring little how he filled his treasury, he was evidently able to inspire Artemisia with a passionate affection, for she was inconsolable in her loss, and is said to have mingled the ashes of her husband with her daily drink. As a visible form of her grief she gave orders for the construction of that splendid monument which was included by the ancients among the Seven Wonders of the world, and at its consecration offered a princely prize for the orator who should pronounce the best eulogy of Mausolus. The tomb was erected at Halicarnassos, the capital of Caria, and remained practically intact until early in the fif-



From Photograph by Donald Macbeth.

BRITISH MUSEUM: MÁUSOLEUM ROOM.

teenth century. Then, and in the following century, it suffered from ruthless vandalism, and when an effort was made in 1856 to recover its remains all that was left were the fragments now exhibited in the British Museum.

Although many efforts have been made to arrive at some idea of the original appearance of the tomb, no satisfactory conclusion has been reached. It is not even known whether the monument was eighty feet high or a hundred and forty feet; all that is clear is that the building was surrounded by a richly sculptured frieze in high relief, and that it was adorned with various statues and groups, including a number of lions. Some idea of the colonnade of the Mausoleum may be gathered from the Ionic column shown on the west side of the room, while in the centre will be seen the chariot group which is thought to have stood on the summit of the monument. Behind the fragments of the two horses are statues of Mausolus and Artemisia. Of the frieze there are seventeen sections, depicting a battle between the Greeks and Amazons, some of the latter being but lightly clad. The relief is much higher than that of the Parthenon frieze, but in other respects may be worthily compared with that work. Other fragments include part of the chariot frieze and a number of the lions which were probably grouped around the monument as guardians.

Retracing his steps to the Ephesus Room the vis-

itor will there find the remains of two temples of Artemis, or Diana. The first temple was built in the sixth century and set fire to in 356 B. C. by a citizen named Herostratos who wished in that way to secure immortality. Undismayed by their loss the Ephesians at once set to work rebuilding, declining, however, the offer of Alexander to defray the entire cost on the condition that his name was inscribed on the temple. The new building is supposed to have been completed by the end of the fourth century, and by the time of the visit of the Apostle Paul the worship of Diana was still sufficiently vigorous to lead the populace to shout, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians." In view of that New Testament association it could be wished that the remains of the temple were less fragmentary, but even the base of the sculptured column will have an absorbing interest for all students of New Testament history. Of the older temple the remains include two Ionic capitals and a cornice composed of small fragments. The other miscellaneous sculptures of the room embrace a head of Perseus, a torso of a Muse, a head of Venus, and a striking portrait head of Alexander the Great. The latter reproduces that slight twist of the head which is said to have had its origin in a wound on the warrior's shoulder, and recalls the reference of Plutarch: "The statues of Alexander that most resembled him were those of Lysippus, who alone had his

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FIGURE OF NEREID.

THE BUST OF "CLYTIÈ."

permission to represent him in marble. The turn of his head, which leaned a little to one side, and the quickness of his eye, in which many of his friends and successors most affected to imitate him, were best hit off by that artist."

Thus far the visitor has been wandering among the ruins of ancient Greece alone; he will now, as he passes into the third Græco-Roman Room, realize that the Greeks have lost their identity and become associated with the fortunes of their Roman conquerors. For the sculptures exhibited in this and the two following galleries are in the main thought to have been executed by Greek artists for Roman purchasers. They are largely the work of copyists rather than creators, and consequently more notable for their technical qualities than for original ideas. One of the most beautiful works in this room is the bust known as "Clytiè," but which some authorities think may be a portrait of Antonia, the daughter of Mark Antony, who was so celebrated for her beauty, virtue, and chastity. That Emerson should have been specially attracted by this bust is not surprising; it is distinguished for that reposeful loveliness, that revelation of the "secret of form," which could not fail to commend it to the seer who wrote: "The best of beauty is a finer charm than skill in surfaces, in outlines, or rules of art can ever teach, namely, a radiation, from the works of art, of human character — a won-

derful expression, through stone or canvas or musical sound, of the deepest and simplest attributes of our nature, and therefore most intelligible at last to those souls which have these attributes. . . . A confession of moral nature, of purity, love, and hope, breathes from them all."

Among the sculptures worthy of special note in these three rooms are the relief tablet representing the Apotheosis of Homer, a figure of Endymion asleep on Mount Latmus, a relief depicting the destruction of the children of Niobe by Apollo and Artemis, a copy of the bronze Discobolos of Myron, the Towneley Venus, and a head of Homer.

While all the foregoing are redolent of classical mythology, and as such pleasant reminders of the picturesque legends of old Greece, it may well be that the visitor will turn with quickened interest into the gallery of Roman Busts, for there he will come face to face with the marble images of men who belong not to the shadowy realm of fable but to the realities of history.

Rightly is the brave procession headed by a life-like bust of Julius Cæsar, "the greatest man of ancient times," whom Macaulay placed higher than Cromwell and Napoleon because he "united the talents of Bonaparte to those of Cromwell; and he possessed also, what neither Cromwell nor Bonaparte possessed, learning, taste, wit, eloquence, the sentiments and the manners of an accomplished

gentleman." Of Augustus, the patron of Virgil, the encourager of Horace, and to whom Mæcenas left the kindly poet as a legacy, — "Bear Horace in your memory as you would myself," — there are three heads, one showing the future emperor as a youth, and the others perpetuating the looks of his prime. Near at hand is Tiberius, the emperor who ruled Rome at the time of the Crucifixion, and the man who, in the words of Tacitus, made his reign "one scene of lust, and cruelty, and horror." Then there is Claudius, the conqueror of Britain, whose marble presentment suggests not a little of that uncouthness of deportment, that physical weakness and grotesqueness which made him the butt of contemporary wits. Whether, however, the bust of Nero would suggest the infamous character of the man to one unacquainted with his record of crime and infamy is a question which each must decide for himself. Indeed it might be a suggestive exercise for the visitor to pass along this gallery and, refraining from reading the names on the busts, try to divine from the marbles alone some estimate of the men they represent. He might infer the martial qualities, the statesmanship of Trajan, and the restlessness of Hadrian, and the devotion of Antoninus, or the philosophic bent of Marcus Aurelius. And yet he might not. One observer has noted the "look of painful thought" which is certainly characteristic of Trajan, and on the other

hand it would seem as though Walter Pater had formed an independent conception of Marcus Aurelius and then come to these two busts of the philosopher-emperor to mark his "bland capacity of brow," his "gracious and courtly" aspect. These may be estimates founded, even if unconsciously, upon previous knowledge; but the most indifferent reader of character could hardly go wrong in forming an appreciation of Commodus. It needs no familiarity with the indictment of Gibbon to divine that this was a man compact of selfishness and a devotee of the grossest vice. It is a presentment which gives colour to the story which credits his paternity to a gladiator and not to the high-minded Aurelius.

From the gallery of busts the visitor should pass to the Hall of Greek and Latin Inscriptions, where, on either side of the entrance to the Reading Room, he will find casts or originals of stone slabs relating to boundary disputes, national subscriptions, decrees, records of rebuilding of walls or bridges, and other inscriptions of historic interest. Mingling with these stones are busts of Greek poets and others, including one of Euripides, and portrait statues of unknown Romans. There is also a spirited group of Mithras slaying the bull.

It is now time to explore the galleries on the upper floor of the museum, to which access may be gained by the main staircase leading off the entrance

hall. On reaching the top and turning to the right the first apartment to be entered is the Room of Terracottas. So numerous and fascinating are the objects displayed in this gallery that they alone would provide occupation for a day's study. The terracottas, diminutive figures baked in clay and representing the various stages of rough modelling after the manner of Ruskin's schoolgirl and her flour paste, and then more careful treatment after the manner of a sculptor's model, and finally casting from moulds, are arranged in historical order, the earliest being in the show-cases on the left. These are exceedingly primitive, but they are quickly followed by examples which show marked growth in skill, while the cases in the centre of the room have an attractive collection of the charming little figures found at Tanagra and Eretria. Various learned theories have been advanced in favour of these figures having been made for offerings to divinities, or as gifts to be enclosed in tombs with the dead, but surely the Greeks were sufficiently lovers of the artistic to utilize them for the decoration of their homes. For the adornment of dining-room or drawing-room, or, indeed, any other apartment in the home, nothing could be more desirable than a few of these charming little figures, some so full of humour, others typical of play, and all of them delightful for their dainty qualities. Down the centre of the Room of Terracottas will be found a series

of terracotta decorations for houses, while at the entrance and in the middle of the gallery are two sarcophagi, one belonging to the archaic period and the other dating from the second century before Christ. The former is weirdly attractive for the grotesqueness of the man and woman reclining on the cover.

Objects illustrating the more graceful side of ancient art are displayed in abundance in a corridor near the terracottas, and in the Room of Gold Ornaments and Gems to which that corridor gives entrance. That the silver rings in the former and the dainty articles of the latter are of priceless worth is indicated by the fact that here there are always more attendants and policemen on guard than in the galleries where the objects are less portable and probably not so valuable. When, many years ago, it was suggested to Sir Henry Ellis, that the museum could be opened on public holidays under proper safeguards, he objected that "there would be something repulsive to Englishmen in knowing that they were watched by the police." Evidently the English character has changed, for no one seems to mind having their progress among the gold ornaments and gems followed by police eyes. Certainly the objects are tempting, such as the famous Portland Vase, for example, or the thousand and one pieces of exquisite and costly jewelry, the diadems, the rings, the brooches, the cameos, and engraved

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GREEK TERRACOTTAS.

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THE PORTLAND VASE.

intaglios and scarabs. The gallery is small, but here indeed are infinite riches in little room.

There are six other galleries to claim the visitor's notice, and these he will do well to explore in this order: first the four vase rooms, then the bronze room, and lastly the room illustrating the daily life of the Greeks and Romans.

Concerning the vase rooms the museum authorities are unusually frank. "A collection of Greek vases," says the official guide-book, "is apt to be somewhat unattractive to those who visit it but rarely. In vases of the earlier periods the grotesque details and methods are more readily perceived than the interest which attaches to all primitive and archaic work in which the craftsman, by slow degrees, becomes master of his art. The meaning of the subjects is often unfamiliar; moreover, the language employed by the vase painters is so terse, the economy of subordinate details, independent of the figures, is so strict that some acquaintance with vases is necessary to enable us to accept the conventions employed — such as a column for a building, a branch for an outdoor scene, a line of dots for broken ground." With this warning kept in view, and remembering that the objects displayed are our chief evidence for the history of art otherwise unknown, the visitor will find much to instruct and delight in the wonderful collection displayed in the four vase rooms. In the first he is introduced to

Greek pottery from pre-historic times to about 600 B. C.; in the second the period embraced is that of the sixth century; in the third the objects belong to the fifth century, with some white Athenian vases; and in the fourth room the observer is made acquainted with what is known as the period of decline. On the archaic vases the decorations are largely of a geometric nature, though occasionally animals are introduced which betray an alien influence; but vases of the sixth century are richly adorned with figure subjects mainly illustrative of mythological incidents. Even the crudest examples, and how much more those of the highest artistic merit, are deeply instructive for the evidence they afford of man's onward movement from those far-off days in which, wherever clay was found, he became a clumsy potter.

While the objects in the vase rooms are almost wholly of Greek origin, those displayed in the Bronze Room reflect once more the blending of Greek and Roman influences. These exhibits have been obtained from tombs and the ruins of temples; in the former category are placed armour, weapons, vases, mirrors, and personal ornaments, which it was customary to bury with the dead; in the latter are included statues small and large, and votive offerings and inscribed tablets. The heroes and heroines of mythology naturally figure largely among the statues and enter profusely into ornamentation.

It is stated, however, that the isolated statuette, such as is common in modern times and abounded in Rome, was comparatively rare among the Greeks. Their metal figures were nearly always associated with a utilitarian purpose. It is notable as supporting Ruskin's A. B. C. that the best examples of Greek work in bronze relief belong to the beginning of the fourth century B. C. One other gallery remains, the Room of Greek and Roman Life, and this may well prove the most arrestive of all the twenty-one apartments devoted to the remains of Greek and Roman civilization. Notwithstanding differences of country, of race, of language, of religion, of manners and customs, after all, the varied members of the great human family are held together in one bond by certain fundamental traits. At the root of all religions lies the religious instinct, and to all men the spirit of play appeals, just as to all men nothing is alien that concerns birth, and childhood, and love, and life-partnership, and home, and death. In the abstract the old Greeks and Romans may seem far off from us, and as unrelated to our lives as though they were denizens of another world; but when in this room one gazes upon the mute relics of their daily lives, the toys they played with, the dress they wore, the tools they handled, the tables at which they ate and the beds on which they slept, the chariots in which they rode or the ships in which they sailed, the coins they passed from hand to hand,

the swords they wielded against the enemies of their country, and the urns in which their ashes were laid to an eternal rest, they become living members of the great human family that knows no land or age. Here, then, are objects which do not appeal to interest on the ground of their mere antiquity, or because they illustrate the progress of man; their one bond is the bond of life. And so the Greek and the Roman stand side by side; we see the two indiscriminately in the market-place, at the council-chamber, before the altar, in the theatre, watching the circus or the arena, or dwelling in peace at home, and finally passing into the great Beyond.

CHAPTER IV

EGYPTIAN ANTIQUITIES

MILTON rather than Old or New Testament theologians is supposed to be responsible for the Satan of modern Christian belief. And, so slowly do the conclusions of scholars find their way into general knowledge, it may be added that Shakespeare and the Bible are still the chief sources of information with most people for such ideas as they possess of Egypt. Although Cook's tours have made the Nile accessible to thousands, and Baedeker has done his best to instruct other thousands in the latest learning of Egyptologists, it is probably no exaggeration to say that for nine persons out of every ten the mention of Egypt starts a train of thought which begins with Cleopatra and ends with Exodus.

Even the "serpent of old Nile" seems to most people to be a person standing on the confines of history; an ever-attractive type of the Scarlet Woman no doubt, but far-removed from the modern world. This remoteness of Cæsar's mistress and the charmer of Mark Antony may be owing in part to those New York and London obelisks known as Cleopatra's Needles, for not many are aware that those granite monoliths were fashioned and erected

some fifteen hundred years before Cleopatra was born. As a matter of fact, to the Egyptologist the reign of Cleopatra is an event almost as recent as yester year.

Nor is the period of the Exodus an event of such hoary antiquity as many of us imagine. According to the most conservative scholars, the Egypt of the Bible belongs to what they call the Middle Kingdom of Egyptian history, when the country already had behind it a record of several thousand years of ripe civilization. The fact is, then, that when one reaches the utmost verge of the backward-looking thought of the majority, when the imagination penetrates to the days of Moses, or to Joseph's tribulations with Potiphar's lascivious wife, the beginnings of Egyptian history are still a long, long way off.

Herodotus was told as much more than two thousand years ago. In his devious wanderings the father of history reached the land of the Nile, and everywhere cultivated the friendship of the priests. It was one of the latter, as he records, who remarked to him, "You Greeks are only children." And, whatever may have been the thoughts of Herodotus, to-day there is no denying the assertion. We are all "only children" compared with the Egyptians. As the visitor to the British Museum gazes upon the ancient vellum of the Codex Alexandrinus and recalls that some fourteen hundred years have passed away since it was written, or stands in front of the

Theseus of the Elgin Marbles and realizes that the sculptor who fashioned that stone has been in his grave over two thousand three hundred years, he will surely confess to a feeling that here indeed are objects which dwarf his own three-score-years-and-ten and make young again many a relic which he deemed venerable. And yet that manuscript and that marble are modern and almost contemporaneous compared with the relics of old Egypt.

No wonder, then, that Egyptology is as catching as measles. It is also at least as instructive as orchid hunting. If it teaches nothing else, it does conduce to humility. Races which have fondly imagined themselves to be the "heirs of all the ages" shrink into children of a day compared with the sons and daughters of that really ancient land. They are not merely the offspring of people who specialized in pyramids and mummies; they are the descendants of a race which had attained a high state of civilization countless centuries before the rest of the world had emerged from barbarism. All this would be more a matter of common knowledge than it is if it were not for the Egyptologists themselves. It really is time for those learned students to codify their knowledge, or at least come to some agreement about such matters as chronology and spelling. If the inquirer restricts himself to sitting at the feet of one pundit, his case is not quite hopeless. No doubt he will be prepared to move about

in a region of thought wholly unfamiliar, to wrestle with names and ideas that have all the elements of novelty, and be open to a general readjustment of his knowledge. Even so his task is not a light one; but when he ventures further afield in his studies and wanders to new teachers, his bewilderment will begin. He will discover that the date of the beginning of the first dynasty of Egyptian kings may be placed anywhere between 3180 B. C. and 5510 B. C., that the arrangements of those kings are uncertain, and that he can never be sure of his spelling. So far as mere numbers go, it is a providence that modern schoolboys are not required to learn the list of Egyptian kings. Some of them have trouble enough to memorize the twenty-seven Presidents of the United States or the forty rulers England has had since the Norman Conquest, but such mnemonic exercises fade into insignificance compared with the more than two hundred "principal kings" of Egypt, especially when it is borne in mind how outlandish are the forms of their names.

After all, however, it must not be forgotten that Egyptology is still in its infancy. It is only some seventy years since Dr. Arnold of Rugby wrote: "Is it not marvellous that they can now read the old Egyptian readily? . . . These Egyptian discoveries are likely to be one of the greatest wonders of our age." Much as is known, there is still more to learn. The present condition of our knowledge is well put

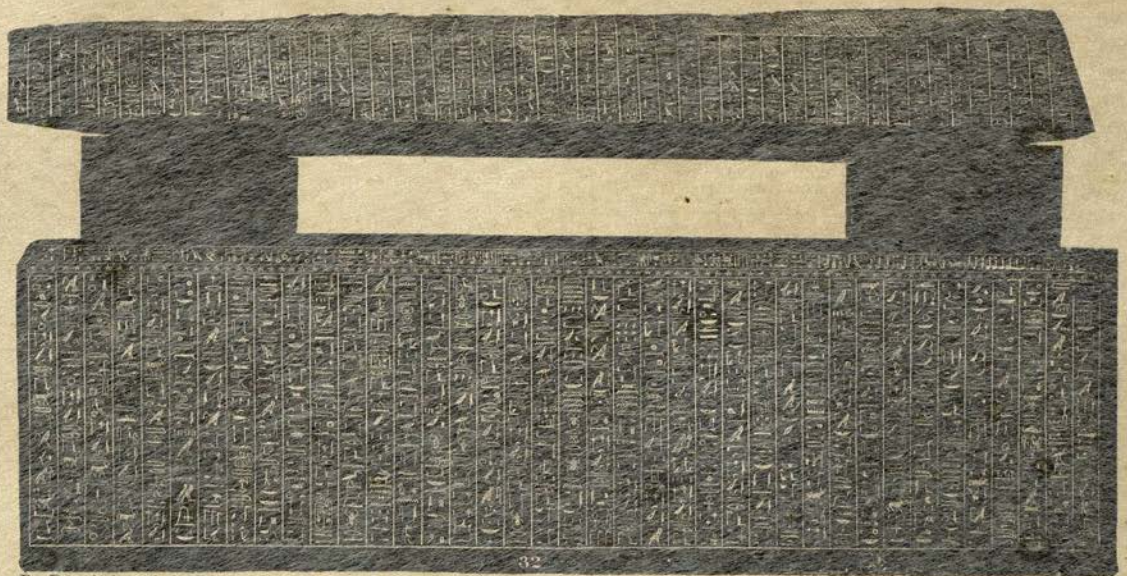
by Professor James H. Breasted when he writes: "Tremendous as is the impression which we receive from the monuments of the Old Kingdom, they are but the skeleton, upon which we might put flesh, and endue the whole with life, if but the chief literary monuments of the time had survived. It is a difficult task to discern behind these Titanic achievements the busy world of commerce, industry, administration, society, art, and literature out of which they grew. Of half a millennium of political change, of overthrow and usurpation, of growth and decay of institutions, of local governors, helpless under the strong grasp of the Pharaoh, or shaking off the restraint of a weak monarch, and developing into independent barons, so powerful at last as to bring in the final dissolution of the state — of all this we gain but fleeting and occasional glimpses, where more must be guessed than can be known."

Reference has already been made to that acquisition of the Rosetta Stone by the museum which had so large a share in the foundation of the department of Egyptian antiquities. It, as the reader will recall, passed into the possession of the British nation as the result of the defeat of the French at Alexandria, when the British general insisted upon including among the spoils of war those antiquities which had been unearthed by the French savants who had been commissioned by Napoleon to make a thorough study of the ancient remains of the country. That

the French were reluctant to part with their treasures was but natural, and when it became plain that their protests would prove ineffectual they stripped the Rosetta Stone of its soft cotton wrapping and threw it on its face. Happily no further damage was done, or otherwise the ancient language of Egypt might have remained undecipherable to this day.

In the annals of learning there is no more romantic chapter than that associated with the Rosetta Stone, which, by the way, derives its name from the fact that it was discovered among the ruins of a fort near the Rosetta mouth of the Nile in 1798.

Even the most recent dictionary will inform its reader that a secondary meaning of "hieroglyphic" is a character or mark "hard to decipher or understand." But the time is not so far distant when no one, whether of the Orient or the Occident, could read or understand Egyptian hieroglyphics. Which is hardly surprising. To be faced with a row of signs which include here a sketch of what looks like an immature tadpole, there with something that resembles a chopper with an abbreviated handle, and in other places with a wavy line that might be intended for the teeth of a saw, or a kind of walking-stick with the rudiments of an umbrella sprouting from the bottom, or a species of lion that on the other hand might be a dog or a cat, is enough to give pause to the most adroit guesser of riddles.



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SARCOPHAGUS OF ANKH - NES - NEFER - AB - RA.

But hieroglyphics were only one form of Egyptian writing; there were two others. Notwithstanding the abundant leisure of the ancient world, the old Egyptians eventually came to the conclusion that their time might be more profitably employed than in laboriously sketching a sort of pipe, a wavy line, a bird, a circle, and three upright strokes when they wanted to write such a simple word as "myrrh." So the scribes put their wits to work and in due time evolved a form of writing known as "hieratic," that is, the priests' writing. This eliminated so much of the pictorial flourishes that it became a great time-saver. More centuries went by, and with the increasing pace of life it seems to have dawned upon the Egyptians that even more economy might be practised in penmanship. This led the way to the "demotic" style, that is, the people's writing. And so it came to pass in ancient Egypt that if one wished to inscribe a tomb, or record a decree, or indite a letter, there were three ways of doing it, the hieroglyphic, the hieratic, or the demotic. Later still, in the period of the Ptolemies, Greek became the language of the kings and ruling classes, and it was not unusual for important decrees to be inscribed on tablets in three forms, namely, hieroglyphic, demotic, and Greek. As the centuries went by, however, the hieroglyphic system grew more and more obsolete, and by the end of the fifth century of the Christian era even the priests had lost the ability to deci-

pher that particular form of writing. Thenceforward, for thirteen centuries, hieroglyphics was a dead language. Neither Eastern nor European could unravel its meaning. Throughout the length and breadth of Egypt, on obelisk and statue, on the doorways to tombs and on the coffin-casings of mummies, on scarab or sepulchral figure, the ancient language of Egypt grew silent, dumb, voiceless. Whereas in the far-off centuries, like the fabled Memnon, those picturesque inscriptions had, in the light of knowledge, whispered strange secrets of the past, now for long generations they became mute to the most obstinate questioning. Or like the Sphinx, they kept their secret, and no Oedipus arose to guess their riddle.

All the while, however, there was safely buried in the sands near the Rosetta mouth of the Nile that slab of basalt which was to solve the problem. Away back at the beginning of the second century before Christ a general council of Egyptian priests agreed to commemorate the coronation of their king, Ptolemy V, and the decree passed to that effect was duly inscribed on a stele in the three forms of hieroglyphic, demotic, and Greek, and a replica of that stone set up in various temples by the side of the image of the king. The sands at Rosetta preserved one of those stones for the enlightenment of future ages. For when scholars began to study it, they were of course able to decipher the Greek, and then

to worry out a few lines of the demotic text, and finally, by minute examination and comparison, the hieroglyphic text was made to give up its mystery. That was in 1822, and from that date the work of elucidating Egyptian hieroglyphics went steadily forward; but it has been truthfully claimed that the scientific excavation of Egyptian remains and the fruitful study of their lessons dates from 1883, when Flinders Petrie began his epoch-making work at Tanis.

All this may seem a roundabout way of approaching the Egyptian antiquities of the British Museum, but the visitor will not be in a position to appreciate the interest or instruction of those antiquities unless he bears the foregoing in mind. Nay, he will be well advised to prepare himself still further. He should refresh his memory on the salient points of Egyptian geography and history. He should visualize the land to a certain extent, map out a rough scheme of the sequence of its dynasties, and, above all, gain some general idea of that cult of the dead which played so large a part in Egyptian history and has been the means of throwing so much light on the past.

Egypt, the land, belongs to the small countries of the earth. Apart from that section situated in the Delta, so called because the two main streams of the Nile branch to the sea after the shape of the Greek letter so named, Egypt is but a straggling valley,

some seven hundred miles long and fifteen broad. To the south is the sea; on either side are vast deserts. It will be easily seen, then, how apt is the phrase of Herodotus: "Egypt is the gift of the Nile." Were it not for that river, the valley would be as the sterile, inhospitable, waterless deserts of Arabia and Lybia. Upon the annual rising of the Nile, human life in Egypt is entirely dependent. The Egyptian needs no gloss on the text of the Preacher: "Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days." Each year, as soon as the early summer sun has begun to melt the snows of Abyssinia, the river begins to rise, the widening flood bringing with it a rich burden of fertilizing mud, which, when the waters recede in the autumn, is deposited over the valley and fits the land for another harvest. The Egyptians were not ignorant of their indebtedness to the Nile, or ungrateful to Hapi, the god of the river. Two images of that beneficient deity are preserved in the British Museum, one in the Third Egyptian Room upstairs, the other in the Southern Gallery on the ground floor. For a complete acknowledgment of benefits received it would be difficult to surpass that Hymn to Hapi of which E. A. Wallis Budge has given this spirited translation:

"Homage to thee, O Hapi! Thou appearest in this land, and thou comest in peace to make Egypt live. Thou waterest the fields which Ra hath created, thou

givest life unto all animals, and as thou descendest on thy way from heaven thou makest the land to drink without ceasing. Thou art the friend of bread and drink, thou givest strength to the grain and makest it to increase, and thou fillest every place of work with work. Thou art the lord of the fish, thou art the creator of barley, and thou makest the temples to endure for millions of years. Thou art lord of the poor and needy. If thou wert overthrown in the heavens, the gods would fall upon their faces, and men would perish. When thou appearest upon the earth, shouts of joy rise up and all people are glad; every man of might receiveth food, and every tooth is provided with meat. Thou fillest the storehouses, thou makest the granaries to overflow, and thou hast regard to the condition of the poor and needy."

Held captive by the Nile on either side, and repelled by the sea on the south and by rocky barriers on the north, the ancient Egyptians lived an isolated life. That this environment influenced their character, and reacted in a suggestive manner on their mind and thought is beyond question. Their architecture would alone be a cogent witness to that fact.

Whence the Egyptians originally came, and when, are questions which cannot be answered in a satisfactory manner. As with other nations, their history shades off into a pre-historic period. But the most conservative Egyptologists are agreed that at

least four thousand five hundred years before Christ the land was already settled, and its inhabitants highly civilized. So far, however, as actual chronology goes, it is usual to divide the history of Egypt into three divisions, representing the thirty dynasties of kings that have ruled over the land from 4400 B. C. to 340 B..C. These three periods are known as the Old Kingdom, the Middle Kingdom, and the Empire, and it is usual to give eleven dynasties to the first, eight to the second, and eleven to the third. This may be a compromise, but the scheme is the best available at present, and it at least offers the visitor to the British Museum a framework on which he can arrange the ideas gathered on his journeys through the galleries.

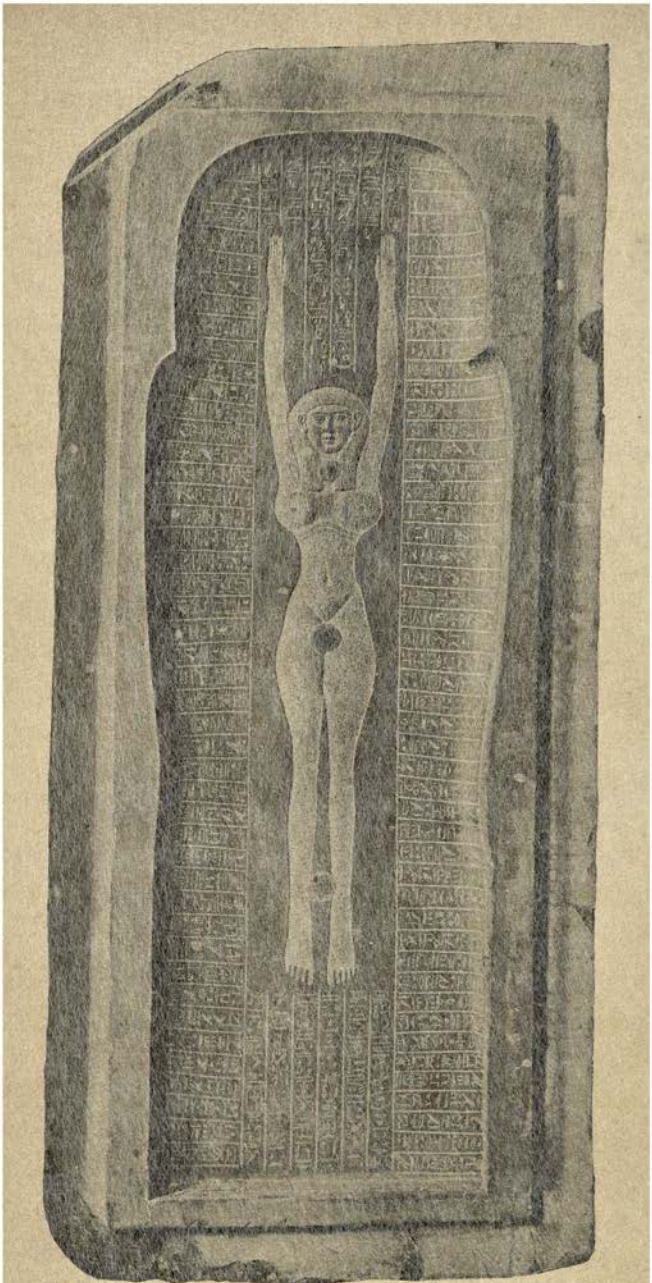
One other fact must be borne in mind: the supreme importance of the Egyptian cult of the dead. No attempt can be made here to give even an outline of Egyptian theology. When it is remembered that there were more than fifty principal gods and goddesses native to the soil, that there were numerous alien gods who seem to have come in for a fair share of adoration, and that in addition there were many animal gods and goddesses, besides sacred birds and reptiles and fish, it will be obvious that any attempt to educe order out of this chaos would be a formidable task. Dr. Wallis Budge reminds us that every district, city, town, and village possessed a god, with a female counterpart and a

son, and also a being of evil, or devil, to say nothing of the creatures who in modern times would be called vaguely spirits or fairies. He adds: "The names of a great many have been lost, but about two hundred gods are mentioned in the Pyramid Texts, about four hundred and eighty in the Theban Recension of the Book of the Dead, and about twelve hundred in the various works which deal with the Other World." The important thing to remember, however, is that in one way or another these supernatural beings were connected with that life after death to which the Egyptians attached so much importance.

As a consequence, in no other country of the world has so much attention been devoted to the equipment of the dead for their well being in the unseen. This gradually resulted in the accumulation of a multitude of mortuary customs unique in the history of mankind. Dr. Breasted affirms that the Egyptian was never able to detach the future life entirely from the body; "it is evident that he could conceive of no survival of the dead without it. Gradually he had developed a more and more pretentious and a safer repository for his dead, until, as we have seen, it had become a vast and massive structure of stone. In all the world no such colossal tombs as the pyramids are to be found." A vizier of the Sixth Dynasty built a tomb containing thirty-one rooms, upon the decoration of

which immense pains were expended. Many of the walls were adorned with scenes carved in relief, which have contributed not a little to our knowledge of those far-off days. The burial chamber was situated far below these massive structures and made as secure as possible. "On the day of burial," says Dr. Breasted, "the body, now duly embalmed, was subjected to elaborate ceremonies re-enacting occurrences in the resurrection of Osiris. It was specially necessary by potent charms to open the mouth and ears of the deceased that he might speak and hear in the hereafter. The mummy was then lowered down the shaft and laid upon its left side in a fine rectangular cedar coffin, which again was deposited in a massive sarcophagus of granite or limestone. Food and drink were left with it, besides some few toilet articles, a magic wand and a number of amulets for protection against the enemies of the dead, especially serpents. . . . The deep shaft leading to the burial chamber was then filled up to the top by sand and gravel, and the friends of the dead now left him to the life in the hereafter." All of which will explain how it has come about that the modern world is in possession of so many mummies and other relics of a time removed by so many thousand years.

In the British Museum alone there are nearly fifty thousand objects connected with the life of ancient Egypt. As they differ so much in size and quality



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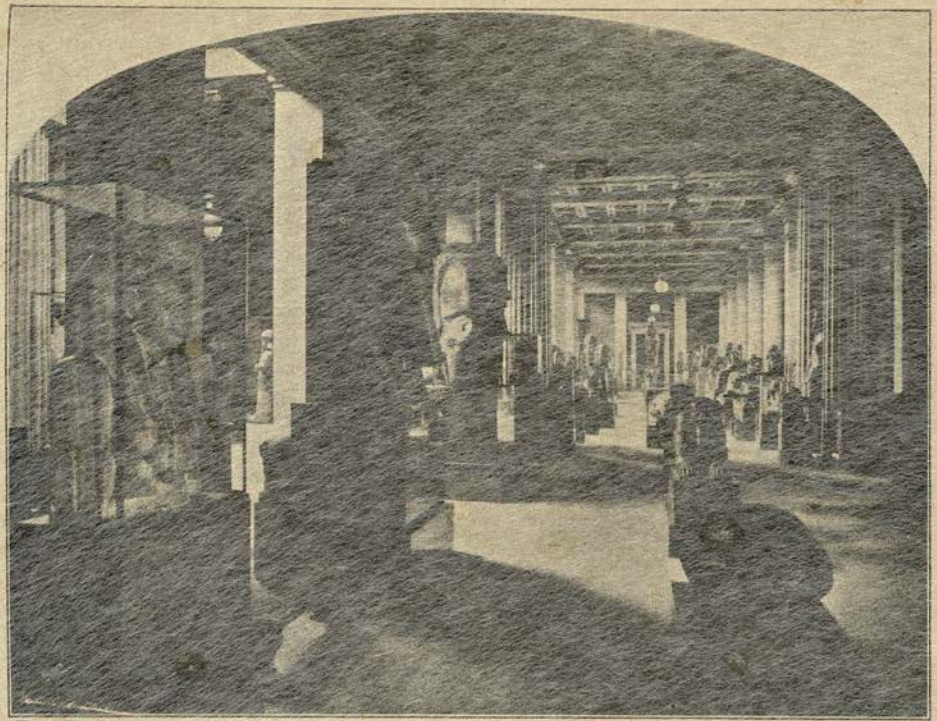
THE SKY-GODDESS NUT.



From Photograph by Donald Macbeth.

BRITISH MUSEUM: EGYPTIAN GALLERY.

it is obviously impossible to arrange them in exact chronological sequence, but wonderful results have been attained in the matter of orderly display. All things considered, the best plan for the visitor to adopt is to explore first the four apartments situated on the ground floor, and then complete his study in the four rooms upstairs. And his natural starting-point is in the Northern Vestibule where are exhibited most of the relics belonging to the eleven dynasties of the Old Kingdom.

Unfortunately the relics do not include any survivals of the First or Second dynasties, although some eighteen kings ruled during those periods, unless the sandstone relief from the tomb of the priest Shera belongs to the Second dynasty. In any case this is one of the oldest Egyptian antiquities, dating back some four thousand years B. C. The other remains of the Third dynasty include a portion of a sculptural stele, a red granite statue of Betchmes, described as a "royal kinsman," a limestone tablet with hieroglyphics praying that the deceased may have a "happy burial," and other reliefs of royal kinsmen. For the Fourth dynasty the survivals are more numerous and important. These take the visitor back to the ages when such notable monarchs as Seneferu, Khufu (Cheops), Khafra, and Menkure ruled over Egypt. The monuments include the stele of a prince who flourished in the reign of Seneferu, who, after the manner of the time, held numer-

ous religious and civil offices, and was altogether a person of considerable importance.

Perhaps, however, as more related to matters of his own knowledge, the visitor will derive greater satisfaction from inspecting three of the actual casing-stones from the Great Pyramid built by King Khufu at Gizeh. It is a puzzle to Egyptologists to understand how a mere noble of a provincial district, such as Khufu was, forced his way to the throne of the Pharaohs, but surely his famous pyramid supplies a key to his masterful character. Evidently his thoughts were on a large scale, for otherwise he would have hesitated before appropriating an area of more than twelve acres for the site of his tomb. The Great Pyramid consists of over two million blocks of stone, each weighing more than two and a half tons on the average, and the story of Herodotus that it represents the labour of a hundred thousand men for twenty years has been shown to be quite credible by modern computation. "Not merely was this work quantitatively so formidable," remarks Dr. Breasted, "but in quality also it is the most remarkable material enterprise known to us anywhere in this early world, for the most ponderous masonry in the pyramid amazes the modern beholder by its fineness. Some of the masonry finish is so fine that blocks weighing many tons are set together with seams of considerable length, showing a joint of one ten-thousandth of an

inch, and involving edges and surfaces 'equal to optician's work of the present day, but on a scale of acres instead of feet or yards of material.'" Hence the interest of these three casing-stones, and the cast of a stone statue of Khufu himself, the builder of that mighty pyramid. It should also be observed that there are in addition several mortuary relics connected with the reign of that notable king, such as the stelæ of several officials and the painted limestone figures of Katep and his wife. The latter object is notable as an early example of that affectionate hint which Egyptian sculptors were prone to give in their groups of husband and wife. It will be observed that the left arm of Mrs. Katep has been somewhat abnormally prolonged to enable her to clasp her husband round the waist; in other statues the husband is depicted as reciprocating the action.

Whether Khufu were or were not the architect of the famuos Sphinx, it seems agreed that that massive monument may have been begun by his orders. It is fitting, then, that the relics of the Great Pyramid should have as near companions a portion of the beard of the Sphinx and a fragment of the serpent which once adorned its forehead. On each can be traced some tinge of the red colour with which they were originally painted.

Khufu's exploits as a pyramid-builder proved infectious. His immediate successors, Khafra and

Menkure, tried to emulate his example, with what results may be seen in the second and third pyramids at Gizeh. Neither of them can compare with the Great Pyramid of Khufu, even though the pyramid of Khafra does contain about sixty million cubic feet of masonry and ladens the earth with a burden of nearly five million tons. Menkure's tomb is still smaller, and is more scamped in its workmanship. Judging from the monumental remains in the Northern Vestibule, however, the pyramid of Khafra had plenty of officials to superintend its construction. One of the relics is a massive limestone door from the tomb of Thetha, a royal kinsman who in addition to overseeing the building of the pyramid was master of the mysteries and magical ceremonies performed in connection with the progress of that structure. But Thetha was an idle man compared with Ptah-shepses, who, judging from the inscription on his stele, was a shocking pluralist. Not only was he a high priest twice over, and chief libationer, and superintendent of the royal storehouses and temple property, but he was besides royal barge-master, and clerk of the works. If his epitaph is to be taken as evidence, he was able to please his kingly masters in all his multifarious occupations.

Surely it will lend additional interest to these survivals of the Fourth dynasty to recall that this is the period of Egyptian history to which belong

some of those fascinating tales so admirably translated by Professor Petrie. The stories of the magicians are recorded as having been told to King Khufu by his son, Khafra being responsible for that tale which sets forth the sinful intrigue of a chief official's wife, who became enamoured of a royal page and invited him to a dalliance in a garden lodge. As the page acquired the habit of taking a bath in the lake after enjoying his pleasure with the lady, the outraged husband made a miniature wax crocodile, which, on being cast into the lake, was transformed into the genuine article, with disastrous results for the wayward page. He, however, was not the only sufferer. At the king's command, the sinning wife was burned to death in front of her master's harem and her ashes cast into the river.

Another son of Khufu entertained his father with an early variant of the legend of the king who was wearied with his pleasures, and demanded some new excitement. His chief scribe was equal to the occasion: "Let thy majesty go upon the lake of the palace, and let there be made ready a boat, with all the fair maidens of the harem of thy palace; and the heart of thy majesty shall be refreshed with the sight, in seeing their rowing up and down the water, and seeing the goodly pools of the birds upon the lake, and beholding its sweet fields and grassy shores; thus will thy heart be lightened. And I also will go with thee. Bring me twenty oars

of ebony, inlayed with gold, with blades of light wood, inlayed with electrum; and bring me twenty maidens, fair in their limbs, their bosoms, and their hair, all virgins; and bring me twenty nets, and give these nets unto the maidens for their garments." Evidently that scribe was born to be a ballet master, and, like all theatrical producers, was determined not to miss any of the fun. The wanderer through the Northern Vestibule should remind himself of these tales; they will help to assure him that the ancient Egyptians were not altogether such solemn persons as their tombs and pyramids and statues might lead one to suppose.

Incomplete as are the remains of the first eleven dynasties, comprising what is known as the Old Kingdom, the cumulative effect of these elaborate sepulchral stelæ, these statues, and all that they suggest of those far-off people of whom they are the chief memorial, is not inconsiderable. That period of Egyptian history has left us, in the words of Dr. Breasted, "the imposing line of temples, tombs and pyramids, stretching for many miles along the margin of the western desert, the most eloquent witness to the fine intelligence and Titanic energies of the men who made the Old Kingdom what it was; not alone achieving these wonders of mechanics and internal organization, but building the earliest sea-going ships and exploring unknown waters, or pushing their commercial enterprises far

up the Nile into inner Africa. In plastic art they had reached the highest achievement; in architecture their tireless genius had created the column and originated the colonnade; in government they had elaborated an enlightened and highly developed state, with a large body of just law; in religion they were already dimly conscious of a judgment in the hereafter, and they were thus the first men whose ethical intuitions made happiness in the future life dependent upon character."

According to the best evidence available, the passing of the Old Kingdom took place in a period of upheaval, which at last gave place to the Middle Kingdom, the beginning of which is marked by the reign of Amenemhat I, the founder of the Twelfth dynasty. He appears to have carried out a kind of Domesday survey of Egypt, and still to have left a pleasant memory among his subjects, for in his reign "no man went hungry or thirsty." He was succeeded by his son, Usertsen I, of whose reign the early bays of the Northern Gallery contain some interesting relics. These include a red granite stele setting forth the gifts of the king to the gods of the First Cataract of the Nile; a head of a colossal statue of the monarch, found at Memphis; and numerous stelæ and other sepulchral memorials of his many servants. One of these, Neferu, had charge of the royal barges; another was responsible for the private apartments of the palace.

In the first bay of the Northern Gallery the visitor will discover a monument which revives the long-completed struggles of a gold-searcher of a type which has had many modern duplicates. It is the tombstone of one named Sa-Hathor, who during the reign of Amenemhat II, some two thousand five hundred years before Christ, seems to have been sent to the Sudan by his royal master in charge of the mining works there, and proved so efficient a servant in gold searching that when his labours were over his memory was honoured by this pretentious stele. Under the same king lived that Sa-Menthu whose many royal offices are duly recorded on his monument in the sixth bay.

Of the ten kings who make up the Twelfth dynasty the one who impressed himself most upon his age was Usertsen III, to whom is credited the conquest of the Northern Sudan and the first invasion of Syria by a monarch of Egypt. He set up a monument to mark the most southerly limit of his kingdom, inscribed with a decree prohibiting the blacks to enter Egypt without special permission. That he was a sovereign of unusual importance may be inferred from the numerous statues which are displayed in the Vestibule and the first and third bays of the Northern Gallery. They show the king at different periods of his life, one giving him a countenance of great strength and marked by individuality not common in Egyptian sculpture. In close

proximity to the statues of Usertsen III are stelæ commemorating the lives of some of the leading officials of his reign. It should be noted, too, that the statue of the king in the Vestibule depicts him with his feet resting on nine bows, a symbol of his conquest of the Sudan tribes.

Among the other relics of the Twelfth dynasty are countless stelæ of high officials, sepulchral tablets, statues of kings and royal kinsmen, and a formidable array of altars or tablets for offerings.

Between the Twelfth and Eighteenth dynasties is another of those chaotic periods which not all the researches of Egyptologists have yet availed to reduce to order. "Rapid dissolution followed, as the provincial lords rose against each other and strove for the throne. Pretender after pretender struggled for supremacy; now and again one more able than his rivals would gain a brief advantage and wear his ephemeral honours, only to be quickly supplanted by another." Then came the Hyksos kings of Josephus, whose tyranny at last united the Egyptians in one grand effort and led to the establishment of another stable dynasty. Of this turbulent period there are various relics in the Northern Gallery, including some noble statues, numerous stelæ of private individuals, and a granite lion inscribed with the name of Khian, a Hyksos king of about 1800 B. C.

Brighter days dawned with the accession of

Amasis I, the founder of the Eighteenth dynasty, of whom there is one remarkable memorial in the form of a massive granite altar, situated in the sixteenth bay. Then came Amenhetep, the founder of the powerful brotherhood of the Priests of Amen, and a great builder of temples. There is a striking limestone statue of this king in the third bay, and elsewhere in the gallery are other remains of his period. Both these kings helped towards the quieting of the country, but their efforts were insignificant compared with the triumphs of Thothmes III, who, beginning life as a priest in the temple of Karnak, won the hand of the heiress of the old line of princes, and gradually amassed such power as no ruler of Egypt had ever acquired. He was perhaps the most warlike of the rulers of the land of the Nile, leading his armies into Palestine, Syria, and other lands of Western Asia, and everywhere proving victorious. The spoils of war so enriched his treasury that he was able to undertake vast building operations, including that mammoth colonnade in the temple of Amen at Karnak. He it was, too, who set up those numerous "Cleopatra's Needles" which are to be found so plentifully in all lands save that of their original home. Of this masterful king the museum contains some deeply interesting relics, chief among them being that massive red granite head of Thothmes himself which dominates the centre of the upper portion of the

Northern Gallery. When seen in profile this head may be disappointing, having the appearance of weakness rather than strength; but when examined full-face it will be found that this erroneous impression has been caused by the loss of the chin, and that the face is one of pronounced character, even though the lips are markedly sensual and suggestive of negro descent. In the second bay is a massive granite monument set up by the king at Karnak, and in the twelfth bay is exhibited a fragment of a granite obelisk which he caused to be erected at Heliopolis, being, in fact, a portion of that "Cleopatra's Needle" which stands on the Thames Embankment. Other remains which link us to the reign of this potent monarch are a stele depicting Thothmes in relief in the act of making an offering to a god; a jamb of a door inscribed with his name; and a memorial to the first prophet of Osiris.

Two kings of little note succeeded Thothmes, and then the throne of Egypt was occupied by Amenhetep III, better known perhaps as the Memnon of the Greeks. To him must be credited the Colossi of Memnon, and countless massive structures at Thebes, at Karnak, at Luxor, and elsewhere. A colossal statue of the king is to be seen in the eighth bay, and in other bays will be found twenty-four black granite statues of the fire goddess Sekhet which owe their existence to Amenhetep. That god-

dess was evidently a favourite with the king, for in addition to the series just named there are numerous other statues of her from Karnak. In the sixth bay is a tablet recording an expedition of the king to the Northern Sudan, while other relics include a head from his sarcophagus, a column from a temple of his building, and coffins and other memorials of officials who lived in his reign. Of the two red granite lions in the tenth and eleventh bays, the former bears an inscription stating that it was made by Amenhetep for a temple in honour of himself as the god of Nubia. These lions are worthy of note if only for the fact that Ruskin declared them to be the finest embodiment of animal majesty preserved in any works of the ancient world. It is pleasant to see, too, as may be proved by a glance at the statues of Arineferu and his wife in the third bay, that nubile affection was still surviving in ancient Egypt, for the husband as well as the wife in that painted group has stretched forth an arm in search of a waist. As the monument was erected by a daughter of the pair, to "keep alive" her parents' names, the evidence may be accepted as affording presumptive proof of a happy wedlock.

Save for Amenhetep IV, no other king of the Eighteenth dynasty calls for much notice. He, however, was notable as a dreamer, and appears to have anticipated the German Kaiser's passion for theology. Nay, he attempted to found an entirely

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HEAD OF A PRIESTESS OF THE XVIIITH DYNASTY.

new religion, with the inevitable consequence of rousing priestly hostility. Consequently few relics have survived from his time, for his temples and shrines were demolished shortly after his death. However, the base of one of his statues may be seen in the Northern Gallery, and in the tenth bay is the stele of one of his officials. The dynasty as a whole has left nothing of greater merit than the monument shown in the Southern Gallery of a priest, or other high official, and his wife. There is character in both the faces, the workmanship is of a high order, and at last one gains a sense not only of humanity in the subjects but of genius in the sculptor.

Two kings of the succeeding dynasty, the Nineteenth, played a conspicuous part in ancient history. Rameses II occupied the throne for sixty-seven years, enjoyed himself with countless wives, rejoiced in the paternity of more than a hundred and sixty sons and daughters, waged war with zest, and eclipsed all his predecessors in passion for building. Than his no name so frequently crops up on buildings all over Egypt, for he believed thoroughly in taking credit for all he did, even if it were merely the carrying out of slight repairs. Consequently the British Museum galleries are rich in examples of his monuments, while the statues of the tireless monarch are almost beyond count. A somewhat battered wooden effigy may be found in the Central Saloon, and in close proximity is the upper portion

of one of his colossal statues. One of the most enormous casts in the building, too, that, namely, which dominates the Vestibule, also perpetuates the features of Rameses II. His successor, Menephthah, deserves attention because he is thought to have been the king who oppressed the children of Israel. Among the survivals of his reign is a door-jamb from his temple at Memphis.

With the last kings of the Nineteenth dynasty the Middle Kingdom came to an end, giving place to the Empire which was to be protracted to the year 340 B. C. Of the eleven dynasties included in that period there are countless relics in the Central Saloon and the Southern Gallery, including the striking Hathor-headed capital from a temple at Bubastis, the magnificent sarcophagus of the queen of Amasis II, the voluptuous statue of governor Uah-ab-Ra, and the richly-decorated sarcophagus of King Nekht-Heru-hebt. The outside of the latter is closely inscribed with texts and pictures from the Book of the Other World, and the inside with figures of numerous gods. The latter, however, are practically effaced, owing, perhaps, to the sarcophagus having been used as a bath for several centuries. One of the most attractive relics of the Twenty-sixth dynasty, is the mummified effigy of an inspector of scribes shown in the twenty-seventh bay. He was evidently a person of more fleshly build than the average Egyptian and flourished on

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SARCOPHAGUS OF UAH - AB - RA.

his office. In view of his substantial girth, it provokes a smile to learn that his inscription anticipates that he would "rise like a lily" on a lake of the unseen world. That he would float without any effort might have been taken for granted.

Reminders of other phases in the history of Egypt are provided by the stone circular vessel in the twenty-ninth bay inscribed with the name of Alexander the Great, the numerous reliefs and edicts and stelæ of the Ptolemaic period, not forgetting the famous Rosetta Stone, and the countless tablets which recall the Roman and Arab periods of supremacy. Owing to the prevailing sombre colour of the exhibits, and the massiveness of their proportions, the explorer of the four galleries on the ground floor of the museum will probably gain a gloomy impression of Egyptian life. The straight lines of which their sculptors were so enamoured, and the heavy masses favoured by their architects were, no doubt, eminently suited to the special features of Egyptian landscape and the refulgent sunshine of the country, but they are apt to be somewhat trying when arranged in a museum and repeated without end. Happily in the four upstair galleries, the visitor has an opportunity to supplement his experiences in the downstair rooms.

And yet it should be noted that, as was the case in the apartments on the ground floor, the contents of those galleries on the first floor are largely con-

cerned with the death rather than the life of the ancient Egyptians. In the First and Second Egyptian Rooms the principal objects are some fifty mummies, over a hundred coffin cases, and numerous examples of the Canopic jars which were placed in tombs, and countless figures of gods and other fabled persons such as were usually bestowed in the chamber of death. It has been shown earlier in this chapter that the Egyptian could not conceive of a future life separated from his mortal body, and all the contents of these two rooms, and most of the objects shown in the Third and Fourth Rooms, are so many conclusive proofs of that fact.

Holding so strongly to the belief that life in the hereafter had a close likeness to life as it was enjoyed in the visible world, it followed as a natural result that the Egyptians exerted themselves to the utmost in preserving the bodies of the dead from corruption. Hence their elaborate system of embalming. According to Herodotus, there were three methods employed, the first representing a cost of nearly two hundred and fifty pounds, and the second an outlay of about ninety pounds. The third, the use of which was restricted to the poor, was quite inexpensive. The most expensive method involved the extraction of the brain through nostrils, the removal of the intestines, the filling of the body with fragrant and astringent substances, and its immersion in natron for seventy days. Then came

the swathing process, which is thus described by Dr. Budge: "The linen bandages employed to swathe the body were three or four inches in width; the length varied according to circumstances; as many as four hundred yards are said to have been employed for one mummy. They are generally coarsest near the body, and finest outside. Some mummies have an outer linen shroud dyed red, and over that a network of porcelain bugles, amidst which figures of sepulchral deities and other emblems are introduced. On a few mummies of the earlier dynasties and of the age of Ptolemies, portions of the Book of the Dead (the ancient funeral liturgy of the Egyptians) were written on the outer bandages after they had been laid on. A very common, but generally late, mode of ornamentation of the mummy was the cartonnage, composed of twenty to forty layers of linen tightly pressed and glued together like pasteboard, and covered with a thin layer of stucco. This was modelled in shape of the figure of the dead, and appropriately painted, with figures of deities and inscriptions."

As will be seen from the examples in the First and Second Rooms, the coffins were also elaborately decorated with inscriptions and pictures, generally highly coloured. In one series of wall-cases in the Second Room are exhibited numerous examples of the Canopic jars in which the intestines were placed, while close at hand other wall-cases are filled with

rows of the quaint little figures known as "answerers," because it was their duty to obey the orders of the dead with whom they were buried. This curious habit illustrates once more the material nature of the Egyptian's heaven; he was under the impression that in the hereafter he would be liable to have physical tasks to perform, and in that belief it was essential that he should have servants to whom he could turn for substitutes. Some of these little images belong respectively to the Sixth, Twelfth, Eighteenth, and later dynasties. The oldest coffin shown dates back to about 3600 B. C., while the oldest mummies belong to the Twenty-second dynasty, that is, about 900 B. C.

In the Third and Fourth Rooms the exhibits include sepulchral furniture; mummied animals; figures of the gods; articles of daily life whether for work or adornment; vases in earthenware, porcelain, and alabaster; scarabs and amulets; and furniture and jewelry. The formidable array of figures of the gods will give the visitor some conception of the crowded condition of the Egyptian theogony and inspire him with gratitude for his own more simple theology. Of more human interest are the examples of the writing materials used by these ancient people, and the samples of their tools and weapons, and the specimens of their shoes and sandals. Is it possible that the latter include that lady's shoe, discovered in Egypt, the nails of which

were so arranged as to leave indented in every footprint of the fair wearer the alluring invitation of, "Follow Me"?

On the testimony of one of the cases in the Fourth Room it is demonstrable that Egyptian children, notwithstanding the solemn statues amid which they passed their lives, were not able to repress the play-instinct of their kind, for here are wooden dolls, and tiny animals, and balls, and model houses, and other toys of a kind warranted to appeal to children of any race or age. It is a relief to have such assurances that the ancient Egyptians did not concentrate all their thoughts and care on the kingdom of Osiris and worry themselves all their days as to whether they could save up enough money to ensure their proper equipment for their death chamber. And the toilet articles shown here too, the combs and hairpins, the razors and mirrors are welcome proofs that those long-dead sons and daughters of the Nile were not proof against other human weaknesses. It is a strange world the visitor has been living in as he has explored among these Egyptian antiquities, a world wholly foreign to his own, with little to make him realize that he has been gazing upon mementoes of his own kind, but the toys of childhood and the tell-tale spoils of the toilet-table should assure him that after all the natives of old Egypt had passions akin to his own.

CHAPTER V

BABYLONIAN AND ASSYRIAN ANTIQUITIES

"SINCE I last wrote you I have been employed like the veriest mole in grubbing up the earth."

Such was the opening sentence of a letter addressed by the writer to his mother in 1845. The place from which it was dispatched on its long journey to England was a small village near the banks of the Tigris and within a couple of miles of the mounds of Nimroud. The writer was Austen Henry Layard.

Some six years earlier Layard had obtained his first sight of those vast and shapeless mounds; and again two years later he passed that way on a journey to Constantinople. In the interval he had not forgotten Nimroud; he had, too, frequently discussed with his friends the advisability of excavating those mounds. That a French consul named Botta had made a start on such work quickened his own desire to try his fortune in searching after the long-buried ruins of ancient Assyria. And now, in 1845, he was at last at work, "like the veriest mole."

Ten years prior to that date, however, another young Englishman, Henry Creswicke Rawlinson by

name, a subaltern in the British army, was stationed at Kirmanshah in the Kurdish mountains of Persia, some two hundred and fifty miles distant as the crow flies. Although but in his twenty-fifth year, Rawlinson had mastered the Persian language and was a keen student of Eastern history. At Kirmanshah he was in the heart of a district rich in antiquarian treasures, and some twenty miles distant stood the famous rock of Behistun on which Darius the Great had caused to be inscribed in three languages — Persian, Elamite, and Babylonian — some of the most notable events of his reign. This was the Rosetta Stone of cuneiform discovery; it held the key to that ancient form of writing affected by the Babylonians and Assyrians, the secret of which had been lost for some twenty-five centuries.

Many efforts to probe that secret had been made before Rawlinson's time. The rock and its sculptures and its triple inscription arrested the attention of a traveller in 1734; then of another some sixty years later; and then of several other explorers down to 1818, when one, more daring than the rest, climbed half way up and sketched some of the figures. For it should be remembered that the story of Darius and his exploits was engraved in the face of the Behistun rock some three hundred feet above the level of the plain. The rock was slippery, too, and bare, and almost precipitous. But that did not daunt Rawlinson. By repeated

efforts of his own, and finally by the assistance of a wild Kurdish boy, he at last, after visits spread over twelve years, secured copies of the three inscriptions and a sketch of the principal sculpture. From the results thus obtained, Rawlinson, with the co-operation of other scholars, read the riddle of the cuneiform writing and so gave to the world a vast mass of knowledge relating to the ancient kingdoms of Babylonia and Assyria.

Between them, then, these two men, Rawlinson and Layard, added a new volume to the history of the world, the pages of which — in clay tablets and massive sculpture — are open for all to read in the Assyrian and Babylonian galleries of the British Museum. It was indeed a happy chance which brought two such men together: "Layard, the excavator, the effective task-master, the hard-working and judicious gatherer together of materials; and Rawlinson, the classical scholar, the linguist, the diligent student of history, the man at once of wide reading and keen insight, the cool, dispassionate investigator and weigher of evidence."

Other men have since supplemented their labours, but theirs is the honour of pioneers, and to Layard especially belongs the credit of having uncovered the mounds of Nimroud (the ancient city of Calah), and explored the remains of old Nineveh. Various other sites have also been explored, such as the Birs Nimroud mound, the traditional site of the

Tower of Babel, and the ruins of Babylon city, and other mounds which mark the places where once stood famous towns of the two kingdoms. From all these enterprises a rich harvest has accrued; in the six galleries on the ground floor and in the one spacious apartment upstairs the British Museum has an unrivalled collection of Babylonian and Assyrian antiquities representing a period of four and a half millenniums and dating back to about 4000 B. C. The objects are exceedingly varied, ranging from massive sculptures to tiny carved ivories, from baked clay bricks to alabaster vases, from the bronze decorations of palace-gates to ladies' mirrors.

Although, compared with the ignorance of seventy years ago, so much is now known concerning the ancient kingdoms of Babylonia and Assyria, the time has not even yet arrived when it is possible to present that knowledge in a definite form. Some years must elapse before scholars can have digested and co-ordinated the raw material provided by the countless inscriptions and the innumerable clay tablets and cylinders. What is practically agreed, however, is that of the two kingdoms Babylonia came first in the order of time, and that Assyria was settled by colonists from Babylonia. Some centuries later Assyria became an independent kingdom, and waged war, not only on other peoples, but also on the land of its origin, attaining

at last the predominance of power in Western Asia. In fact, the relations between England and America furnish a rough parallel. The colonists of England went forth and founded a new nation across the Atlantic, taking with them the culture, religion, and literature of their native land, and then, when waxed in strength, broke away from the parent stem. If America should ever conquer England and rule that land from Washington, D. C., the situation would be parallel with what took place in that region of the world now known as Mesopotamia. And the illustration may be taken a step further. Just as the natives of America are credited with being a more pushful, alert race than the people left behind in the "Old Home," so the Assyrians developed qualities of vigour, even of fierceness, altogether alien from the more pastoral traits of the Babylonians.

One other fact needs to be noted. So far as the rulers of the two countries were concerned, the kings of Assyria took the lead for the spectacular nature of their doings. To the extent to which the history of the two countries has been tabulated, it is the monarchs of Assyria who are nearly always in the foreground. The explorer of the British Museum, then, must be prepared to find the northern monarchs most constantly in evidence, especially Tiglath-Pileser I and III, Ashur-nasir-pal, Shalmaneser II, Sargon, Sennacherib, Esarhaddon,

and Ashur-bani-pal. These are the names most frequently met with in connection with the monuments in the Babylonian and Assyrian galleries, and it may be well to bear in mind that their reigns cover a period from 1100 B. C. to about 609 B. C. Of course, as will be discovered, the clay tablets take the visitor much further back into the ancient history of the two kingdoms.

Seeing that the Babylonian and Assyrian antiquities vary in size from colossal figures in stone to tiny tablets of clay such as could be carried in a vest pocket, it is obvious that a strictly chronological arrangement is impossible, but for all that the relics have been grouped in such a manner that the visitor will not have any difficulty in fitting them into a rough scheme of the history of the two kingdoms. Here and there he may have to cast his thoughts forward and backward, but in the main he will have before him at a given time relics sufficiently related as to form a section in themselves.

Perhaps, then, his best plan will be to start in the Assyrian Transept, the eastern side of which is given up to antiquities from the palace of Sargon at Khorsabad, while the objects in the western section consist mainly of monuments from Nimroud. Than the colossal figures which are shown on the eastern side of the Transept it would be impossible to find any sculptures more typically Assyrian. The " Three Fates " of the Parthenon are not more

characteristically Greek, the colossal head of Thothmes III is not more emphatically Egyptian, than these winged and human-headed bulls with their mythological attendants are assuredly Assyrian in their general effect and their smallest details. They stand apart from the sculpture art of any other land; in every line one may see the stamp and individuality of the Assyrian artist. As has been stated, this pair of gigantic figures was discovered at Khorsabad, not far from Nineveh, and had stood originally on either side of an entrance to a chamber of King Sargon's palace. The name and titles of that monarch, together with a brief narrative of his buildings and his military expeditions and conquests are inscribed under the bodies of the bulls in cuneiform writing, and consequently these figures belong to a period more than seven centuries before Christ. More than two thousand six hundred years, then, have elapsed since they were shaped into their present form, but notwithstanding their venerable age the figures have lost surprisingly little of their original sharp-cut outlines, for their elaborate beards, the feathery scales of the bull, the details of the attendant's tunic, richly embroidered at the edges, are still wonderfully crisp.

So ample and ornate are the beards of the attendant and the man-like head of the bull, and these are so characteristic of Assyrian male toilets, that it

will be instructive to recall Layard's remarks on the attention paid by the Assyrians to the adorning of their persons. Besides wearing numerous ornaments, "they most carefully and elaborately platted their hair and beards. The hair was parted over the forehead, and fell from behind the ears on the shoulders, in a large bunch of ringlets. The beard was allowed to grow to its full length; and descending low on the breast, was divided into two or three rows of curls. The mustache was also carefully trimmed, and curled at the ends. The hair, as well as the beard, appears to have been dyed, as is still the custom in Persia; but it has been doubted whether the hair, represented in the sculptures, was natural or artificial. The Egyptians were accustomed to wear large wigs, elaborately platted and adorned; and even false beards were not unknown. The Persians, also, at a later period, adopted this artificial coiffure; but we have no evidence of its having been in use in Assyria. On the contrary, according to Herodotus, the Babylonians wore their hair long. The great regularity of the curls in the sculptures would certainly lead to the impression that part of the hair, at least, was false; but we can scarcely suppose that the warriors, as well as the king, and all the principal officers, wore false beards; the sculptured beards being equally elaborate and studied in the arrangement. The treatment, however, of the hair in the

bas-reliefs may be purely conventional." On the other hand some of the authorities insist that by the fulness or otherwise of the beard it is possible to distinguish between Assyrians and Babylonians, the latter being to the last less addicted to that appendage than the former. It is agreed that the use of cosmetics was widely spread, and that many of the stone vessels which have been found by excavating may have been used for hair-oil.

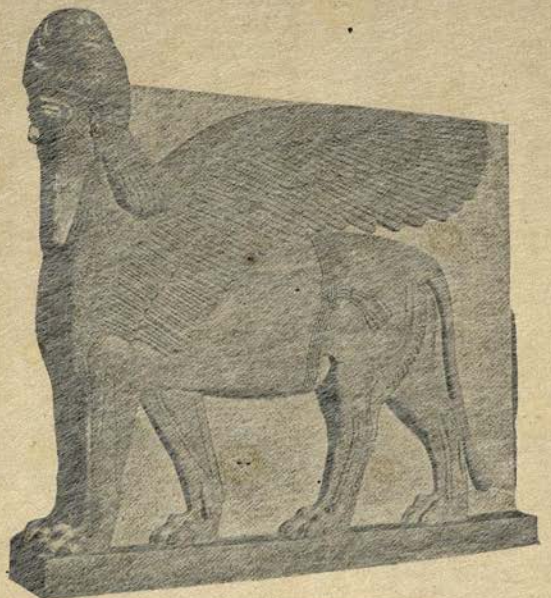
Two other problems are suggested by the figure depicted by the side of each of the man-headed bulls. It will be observed that each of these figures is, the one with his left hand and the other with his right hand, apparently offering to the bull what looks like a fir-cone, and that the hand not so employed holds a small square basket. These objects will be seen frequently in the sculptures. On the older reliefs the basket looks as though it were made of metal; on the more recent it has the appearance of wicker-work. And sometimes it is elaborately adorned, now with a kind of honeysuckle design, at other times with corner decorations in the form of eagles. What do these things mean — the fir-cone and the basket? No final answer has yet been given. As the fir-cone is frequently depicted in the hands of priests, it must have been a sacred emblem, and a French writer has pointed out the connection between the cone of the cypress and the worship of Venus in the religious systems of the East. Lay-

ard, however, hesitated to identify the object held by the figures of the Assyrian monuments with the fruit of the cypress, or to assign any emblematical meaning to its shape. He adds, however, that it has been suggested that, from its inflammable nature, the fir-cone being an apt emblem of fire, whilst the square vessel held the holy water, the two were introduced into sculptures as typical of the sacred elements.

Each of the man-headed bulls in the Transept has an anatomical peculiarity which will hardly escape the visitor's notice. When he gazes at them almost full-face, he will see that each animal has the usual quota of four legs; but if he assumes a standpoint which will enable him to comprehend the side and front views in one glance he will observe that in reality each animal has five legs! Instead of two front legs, there are three; the object of this outrage on nature's plan being a desire to make the animal look symmetrical when seen from the side. Had the artist confined himself to the two sturdy front legs, which are depicted without any bend, a side view which hid one of those legs would have given the impression of one front and two hind legs. The curious device by which that impression is corrected is often repeated in Assyrian reliefs.

On the other side of the Transept, for example, it is repeated in the pair of colossal man-headed and

winged lions which were found by Layard at Nimroud guarding an entrance to the palace of Ashurnasir-pal. He was wont, he has told us, to contemplate for hours these mysterious emblems, and muse over their intent and history. "What more noble forms could have ushered the people into the temple of their gods? What more sublime images could have been borrowed from nature, by men who sought, unaided by the light of revealed religion, to embody their conception of the wisdom, power, and ubiquity of a Supreme Being? They could find no better type of intellect and knowledge than the head of the man; of strength, than the body of the lion; of rapidity of motion, than the wings of the bird. These winged human-headed lions were not idle creatures, the offspring of mere fancy; their meaning was written upon them. They had awed and instructed races which flourished three thousand years ago. Through the portals which they guarded, kings, priests, and warriors, had borne sacrifice to their altars, long before the wisdom of the East had penetrated to Greece, and furnished its mythology with symbols long recognized by the Assyrian votaries. They may have been buried, and their existence may have been unknown, before the foundation of the Eternal City. For twenty-five centuries they had been hidden from the eye of man, and now they stood forth once more in their ancient majesty!" That this was not the interested emo-



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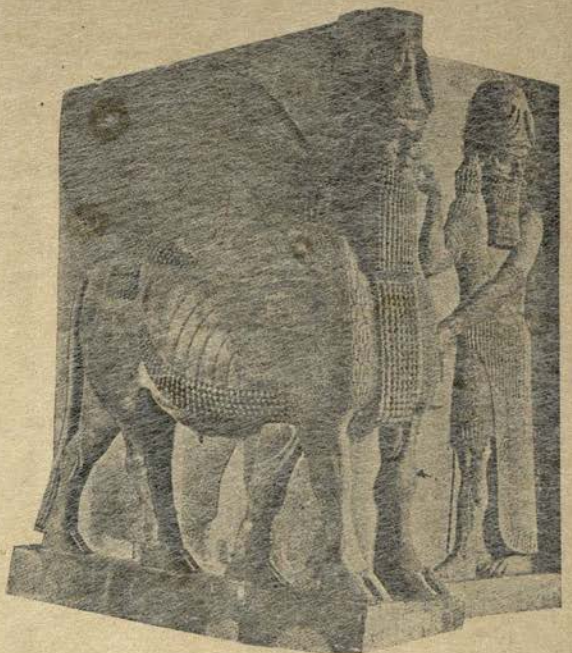
COLOSSAL WINGED LION.



COLOSSAL WINGED BULL.

tionalism of the discoverer is illustrated by the record which has been left by one who paid a visit to the scenes of excavation in Assyria while the work was in progress. "It was of course," he wrote, "with no little excitement that I suddenly found myself in the magnificent abode of the old Assyrian kings; where, moreover, it needed not the slightest effort of imagination to conjure up visions of their long-departed power and greatness. The walls themselves were crowded with phantoms of the past; in the words of Byron, 'Three thousand years their cloudy wings expand;' unfolding to view a vivid representation of those who conquered and possessed so large a portion of the earth we now inhabit. There they were in the Oriental pomp of richly embroidered robes, and quaintly-artificial coiffure. There also were portrayed their deeds in peace and war, their audiences, battles, sieges, lion-hunts, etc. My mind was overpowered by the contemplation of so many strange objects; and some of them, the portly forms of kings and vizirs, were so life-like, and carved in such fine relief, that they might almost be imagined to be stepping from the walls to question the rash intruder on their privacy. Then, mingled with them were other monstrous shapes — the old Assyrian deities, with human bodies, long drooping wings, and the heads and beaks of eagles; or, still faithfully guarding the portals of the deserted halls, the colossal forms of winged

lions and bulls, with gigantic human faces. All these figures, the idols of a religion long since dead and buried like themselves, seemed actually in the twilight to be raising their desecrated heads from the sleep of centuries: certainly the feeling of awe which they inspired me with, must have been something akin to that experienced by their heathen votaries of old."

By a small doorway in the northwestern corner of the Transept the visitor gains access to the Nimroud Gallery, which in turn leads into the Nimroud Central Saloon, the principal contents of both having been rescued from the mound of Nimroud or Calah. Round the walls of the first of these two rooms is arranged a series of sculptures in low relief, each section being crowded with incident or fascinating detail. First in order come the reliefs from the ruins of the palace of Ashur-nasir-pal, king of Assyria from 885 to 860 B. C. As with the other sculptures, it is noteworthy that in almost every case the figures depicted in these reliefs are remarkable for their sturdy physique. Whether the Assyrians of the eighth century before Christ were above the average human stature is difficult to decide in the absence of standards of comparison, but if the evidence of these sculptures is to be relied upon it is manifest that they were men of great physical strength and muscular build. Most of the figures are so robed that at least one leg is bare to

the knee, and it will be observed that those legs are well proportioned and notable for their calf development.

Ashur-nasir-pal was evidently a man of heavy physique, apparently tall, and with strong arms. He is seen in duplicate in the second panel of the Nimroud Gallery, and is made of equal stature to the mythological being in attendance on either side. The scene is supposed to represent the king in the act of worshipping the god Ashur, who is depicted in a winged circle hovering over the sacred tree, a design which looks something like a primitive flying-machine. In reality, of course, the winged disc is symbolical of the sun, for Ashur was originally a solar deity. Who the winged attendants are supposed to represent is unknown; it will be seen, however, that each carries the small basket referred to above, and that each is thrusting forward with his other hand that unfailing fir-cone. The figure of Ashur-nasir-pal, taken in conjunction with the statue of the king in the same gallery, is instructive for the light it throws on the costume affected by the rulers of Assyria. By comparing these two figures, and then extending the collation by an examination of other sculptures elsewhere, it will be found that the variations are few even over a long period, and that the essential garments differ but little. What kind of linen or silk underwear the kings of Assyria may have favoured must be a mat-

ter of speculation, but that they wore two outer robes is obvious. The first was a long flowing garment, which reached to his ankles, the edges of which were richly decorated, while often bands of embroidery were worked across the portion below the waist. Over this was another robe nearly as long, but with an open front. This too was elaborately ornamented at the edges and sometimes over the entire surface; and over both garments at the waist was tied a girdle which was generally finished off with heavy tassels. The statue of Ashur-nasir-pal in the Nimroud Gallery, which is of great interest as being the only example of a statue in the round belonging to its particular period, will mislead the visitor as to the royal footwear if he is not careful to make comparisons with other carvings. Judging from the bare toes of the king protruding from under the hem of his long robe, it might be concluded that the rulers of Assyria were accustomed to go about barefoot. If, however, other figures are studied it will be seen that the usual regal footwear consisted of sandals which had "uppers" high enough to cover the heel but which sloped down to a junction with the sole by the side of the little toe. This type of sandal is depicted on the feet of the king's mythological attendants and is shown also on the feet of his principal officers, while other forms worn by the eunuchs, warriors, and other figures vary from a

simple leather covering for the heel to what has all the appearance of a high-top boot.

On no account should the explorer of these galleries omit a careful examination of the entire series of sculptures round the walls. The set beginning in the western side of the Nimroud Gallery depicts Ashur-nasir-pal engaged in hunting both the bull and the lion, gives a vivid picture of the siege of a city, shows a crowd of fugitives swimming a river on inflated skins, and, among other incidents, the capture of prisoners and spoil, the forcing of a river passage, the capitulation of a city, the counting of the slain, the king and his army passing through mountains, and the enemy in full flight before the pursuit of Assyrians in chariots. In the panels 24 to 26 Ashur-nasir-pal is shown performing some religious rites, a bow in his left hand and arrows in his right, while behind him once more is a winged attendant with the inevitable basket and fir-cone. This relief of the king illustrates the rich bracelets he was accustomed to wear on his wrists, an ornament repeated on the wrists of his attendant. Other panels are instructive for the light they throw on Assyrian religious beliefs, for, apart from the strange fish and eagle-headed deities, and representations of ceremonies in connection with the worship of the sacred tree, such panels as 28 and 29, depicting a conflict between the god Marduk and an evil demon, give spirited form to Assyrian mythology.

The particular conflict portrayed by this relief is of special interest in view of the fact that it plays a prominent part in those legends of the Creation which lend such value to so many of the clay tablets.

Apart from the bas-reliefs illustrating the wars of Shalmaneser II and his triumphs, and other sculptures relating to the conquests of Tiglath-Pileser III, perhaps the chief object of interest in the Nimroud Central Saloon is the famous Black Obelisk erected by Shalmaneser II in the central palace of Nimroud. The day of its discovery was an exciting one for Layard. He was under the impression that his workmen were getting near to some important "finds," but business in Mosul called him away from the Nimroud mound. Hardly had he mounted his horse and started on his journey when a corner of black marble attracted the attention of the superintendent and an Arab was sent after Layard at once. On his return he found the obelisk completely exposed to view. "I descended eagerly into the trench, and was immediately struck by the singular appearance, and evident antiquity, of the remarkable monument before me. We raised it from its recumbent position, and, with the aid of ropes, speedily dragged it out of the ruins. Although its shape was that of an obelisk, yet it was flat at the top and cut into three gradines. It was sculptured on the four sides; there were in all

twenty small bas-reliefs, and above, below, and between them was carved an inscription two hundred and ten lines in length. The whole was in the best preservation; scarcely a character of the inscription was wanting; and the figures were as sharp and well defined as if they had been carved but a few days before. The king is twice represented, followed by his attendants; a prisoner is at his feet, and his vizir and eunuchs are introducing men leading various animals, and carrying vases and other objects of tribute on their shoulders, or in their hands. The animals are the elephant, the rhinoceros, the Bactrian or two-humped camel, the wild bull, the lion, a stag, and various kinds of monkeys. Amongst the objects carried by the tribute-bearers, may perhaps be distinguished the tusks of the elephant, shawls, and some bundles of precious wood." Since that memorable day the inscription on the obelisk has been deciphered and translated, with the result of showing that the scenes and text are devoted to a record of the military expeditions and victories of Shalmaneser II during the thirty years of his reign, and that the reliefs, as Layard thought, depict the bringing of tribute to the conquering king. Two of the kings introduced link this ancient stone with Biblical history, one being Jehu, that king of Israel who won his way to the throne by the murder of Ahab; the other Hazael, the king of Syria, whose army, including nearly seven hundred

horses and over a thousand chariots, became the booty of Shalmaneser.

Before passing into another gallery the visitor should examine the table-cases which are arranged down the centre of the Nimroud Gallery. They contain many interesting small objects recovered from the ruins of Nimroud, including iron locks and spear-heads, reaping-hooks and axe-heads; while the objects in bronze embrace various kinds of bells, mirrors, and numerous bowls, the insides of which are decorated with engraved or relief designs of animals. The latter are said to be the work of Phœnician artists and are thought to be not older than about 700 B. C. Two of the other cases are given up to ivory carvings, which, apart from their admirable workmanship, are of great interest for the light they throw on Assyrian methods of toilette, etc. They also reveal the influence of Egyptian art.

Low relief sculptures depicting incidents in the reigns of three kings are the principal objects displayed in the Assyrian Saloon, the entrance to which is off the Nimroud Gallery. If he wishes to preserve the chronological order the visitor should first seek out the reliefs connected with Tiglath-Pileser III, whose reign extended from 745 to 727 B. C. These include a spirited representation of an assault by the king on an enemy's city, with the capture of the city gods, and a scene in which the monarch is shown receiving his surrendered foes. Next

in order come twelve slabs depicting the siege, attack, and capture of the city of Lachish by Sennacherib, king of Assyria from 704 to 681 B. C. These sculptures are crowded with figures and incident. Bowmen appear in flocks, with serried ranks of spearmen in front, and here and there are groups of slingers in the act of aiming their missiles at the city's defenders, while battering-rams are being hurled against the walls. Of course the perspective of these reliefs is entirely ludicrous; soldiers are briskly ascending impossible slopes in defiance of the law of gravitation, the towers of the city walls are less in height than the stature of the assaulting warriors, and altogether the besieged and the besiegers are jumbled and mixed together in a manner which would have made it inconceivable for the first to defend or the second to attack. Yet the interest of these stone pictures is undeniable. They give the impression of living men in action, while the wealth of detail is informing in a hundred matters of Assyrian warfare. Practically the climax of the series is that panel in which Sennacherib is shown upon his throne outside the city walls receiving tribute from his defeated enemies, and that there may be no mistake as to the purport of the picture a legend inscribed at the top reads: "Sennacherib, king of hosts, king of Assyria, sat upon his throne of state, and the spoil of the city of Lachish passed before him." Here again the figures of the Assyr-

ians convey the impression of muscular, well-built men.

But the chief interest of the Assyrian Saloon centres in the splendid sculptured panels which depict various scenes in the hunting adventures of Ashur-bani-pal, king of Assyria from 668 to 626 B. C. Pictorially these are the most fascinating of all the Assyrian sculptures; artistically they may be grouped with the marbles of the Parthenon, for they represent the high-water mark of Assyrian achievement; and historically they are of absorbing interest for their connection with the career of the ruler who was the prototype of the Greek Sardanapalus and is familiar to the student of English literature through Byron's tragedy. For his facts relating to the career of Ashur-bani-pal, otherwise Sardanapalus, the poet relied upon the highly-coloured statements of Diodorus Siculus, not anticipating that modern research was to discredit the assertions of that Greek historian. His picture of Ashur-bani-pal has no relief; in his judgment that Assyrian monarch was nothing but a degraded voluptuary. He exceeded, Diodorus affirmed, all his predecessors in sloth and luxury; "for besides that he was seen of none out of his family, he led a most effeminate life: for wallowing in pleasure and wanton dalliances, he clothed himself in woman's attire, and spun fine wool and purple among the throngs of his whores and concubines." This frank historian goes on to

charge Ashur-bani-pal with painting his face like a woman, with simulating a woman's voice, etc. And all this Byron took for gospel. In his excuse it might be argued that when he wrote Assyriology was unborn and Nineveh still buried in its mound.

Ashur-bani-pal probably did indulge his flesh when the occasion warranted, but that he was wholly a wanton can no longer be believed in view of what the excavations at Nineveh have brought to light. He has been aptly described as the *grand monarque* of Assyria, and there are proofs beyond number that if he was distinguished for cruelty and sensuality, he was also not the less remarkable for his energy in war and his patronage of literature and the arts. No ruler of Assyria raised the power of that kingdom to the height it attained under his sway.

Had Ashur-bani-pal left no other record of his reign than the slabs in the Assyrian Saloon he would have deserved well of posterity. They are the most moving picture we possess of many phases of ancient Assyrian life, and their value is not lessened because the artist who carved them may have idealized his principal subject. Of course the king is always successful in his hunting expeditions, and his varied poses show him in a heroic light. Now he is seen thrusting a knife into the throat of a lion as it springs up at the back of his chariot, anon the arrows from his bow are hurtling in all directions

and finding a target in the bodies of lions wherever they fly, or elsewhere he is meeting his prey on the level ground and holding his throat with one hand while he deals him a fatal sword-thrust with the other. No doubt these are highly-coloured episodes, and somewhat reminiscent of other and more modern mighty hunters who do not shrink from the camera's recording eye at the climax of their exploits; but with all deductions the sculptures are invaluable for their record of the pursuit of big game in ancient Assyria. Particularly enjoyable are the pictures which show the lion being released from a kind of cage, or the spirited scene depicting the hunting of wild asses, or that other panel where attendants are driving deer into a widely extended net. In all these panels the craft of the artist reaches a high level. His drawing is firm and sure, there is no mistaking what animals are meant, and every figure, whether of beast or man, is instinct with life. Everywhere the details are adroitly carved and rich in information; the kinds of dress, the varieties of weapons, the different forms of shields, the divers types of sandals, the mules with their platted tails, the nets and stakes borne by the servants — all these and countless other particulars are portrayed in a consummate manner.

One of the most attractive panels is that — number 118 — in which Ashur-bani-pal is shown after the hunt pouring out a libation over the dead bodies

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ASHUR - BANI - PAL POURING OUT A LIBATION.

of his prey. The inscription reads: "I, Ashur-bani-pal, king of hosts, king of Assyria, whom Ashur and Bêlit have endowed with might, slew four lions. The powerful bow of Ishtar, the lady of battle, over them I held, and I poured out a libation over them." That sums up the scene so far as the king is concerned, though of course it makes no reference to his beautifully embroidered robe, or his richly-decorated tiara, and naturally there is no allusion to the other details of the picture. The four lions at the king's feet are admirably carved, while no less skill has been bestowed on the altar before which the libation is taking place, and on the group of singers to the left and the little band of attendants on the right.

In the same saloon, but round the walls of the lower compartment, are sculptures of other scenes in the long reign of this remarkable monarch. They preserve pictures of his camp, a busy scene of the preparation of food and the bringing in of spoil; episodes of Ashur-bani-pal's campaign against his twin brother, the revolting king of Babylon; and a view of the king in his garden where he is disclosed drinking wine with his queen. The latter panel is one of the very few in which a woman is introduced in the Assyrian sculptures. Had Ashur-bani-pal been altogether the libertine of Diodorus is it not at least probable that he would have perpetuated in stone many of the sirens who held him captive?

Not only are these Nineveh reliefs barren of such figures, but the visitor will probably note how rarely women are portrayed in the Assyrian monuments.

While exploring the lower floor of the Assyrian Saloon special attention should be given to the large case at the end of the apartment containing thirteen bronze bands made for the gates of a palace of Shalmaneser II. The metal is embossed with scenes of the king's battles and victories, the subjects including representations of the siege of a city of Ararat, an expedition to the land of Nairi, the passage of the Assyrian army over the Euphrates, an interior of an Assyrian camp, and various other warlike themes. Although the nature backgrounds are quaintly and sometimes crudely suggested, the figures of the men are lifelike and the horses and chariots are depicted with much spirit. One band, that which portrays an attack upon a city, affords another illustration of the hazy notions of perspective entertained by the Assyrian artists, for the attacking bowmen are again twice the height of the walls of the city against which they are directing their arrows, while the figures of the defenders are amusingly diminutive.

Turning now to the Nineveh Gallery the visitor will find the walls of that room lined with reliefs excavated by Layard from the site of ancient Nineveh and can hardly fail to observe that these sculp-

tures still bear traces of the fire to which they were subjected when that city was destroyed by the Babylonians and Medes about 609 B. C. Once more the warlike Ashur-bani-pal is greatly in evidence, for five of the panels are taken up with his conquest of Elam and the slaying of its king, Te-umman. These sculptures are notable for their wealth of detail and set forth all the chief incidents of the campaign to the beheading of the Elamite king and the carrying of his head to Assyria. Other slabs portray the torturing of prisoners, the cooking of food in the Assyrian camp, a battle on marshy land, a galley with a ram and two banks of oarsmen, and the reception of ambassadors.

Interesting as these monuments are, however, they cannot compare with the contents of the nine table-cases ranged down the centre of the gallery. These are filled with clay tablets, representative of the more than twenty thousand such relics which have been acquired by the museum during the past half century. They came from the royal library at Nineveh, which was founded by Sargon but largely augmented by his great-grandson, Ashur-bani-pal. That supposedly licentious and abandoned monarch was evidently a great lover of learning, and during his reign and by his special command many thousands of clay volumes were added to the shelves of the royal library. Clay, it must be remembered, was to the Assyrians what papyrus

was to the Egyptians and paper is to the modern world. It was practically the only material on which they wrote the incidents of history and the records of such learning as they had attained. The cases in the gallery will show that the tablets varied considerably in size, some being large enough to contain several columns of writing, while others measured only an inch or two. The clay was of a reddish colour, and when the inscription had been made on its smoothed surface it was baked in an oven and the writing thus made permanent. Such were the books and letters of the Assyrians; and here in these cases are countless examples which have withstood all the vicissitudes of more than two thousand six hundred years.

Ashur-bani-pal was proud of his library; no plutocratic bibliophile of the present day takes greater delight in his richly-bound paper treasures than did the Assyrian king in his clay volumes. And he had his book-plate too. Nearly every tablet of any importance bore this inscription: "The palace of Ashur-bani-pal, king of hosts, king of Assyria, who putteth his trust in the gods Ashur and Bêlit, on whom Nabû and Tashmetu have bestowed ears which hear and eyes which see. I have inscribed upon tablets the noble products of the work of the scribe, which none of the kings who have gone before me had learned, together with the wisdom of Nabû in so far as it existeth. I have arranged them

in classes, I have revised them and I have placed them in my palace, that I, even I, the ruler who knoweth the light of Ashur the king of the gods, may read them. Whosoever shall carry off this tablet, or shall inscribe his name upon it with mine own, may Ashur and Bêlit overthrow him in wrath and anger, and may they destroy his name and posterity in the land."

Ashur and Bêlit seem to have been powerless to protect their worshipper's books. For here they are, thousands of miles from their home, and the posterity of Layard not a penny the worse. But if the king could have known how his clay volumes were destined to add to the knowledge of the world he would probably have qualified his denunciations against whoever should remove them from his palace. That the authorities of the British Museum are undisturbed by their possession of these literary relics is obvious from the unblushing frankness in which they have translated their royal owner's maledictions.

Of course the ordinary visitor must not expect to read these tablets for himself. Not that many of them are not fully exposed to his view; but that it needs the lore of the Assyriologist to translate the curious cuneiform characters into words which he can understand. He must, then, take the contents on trust as he bends over these ancient clay volumes and finds himself face to face with, among other rec-

ords, the Assyrian version of the creation and the deluge. The most competent Biblical scholars admit that the points of likeness between the narratives of the creation as given in Genesis and the version inscribed on these tablets are such that, in view of the greater antiquity of the Assyrian tablets, it would be idle to deny that the Hebrew version is dependent on that which has been rescued from the library of Ashur-bani-pal. That, surely, is sufficient to invest these reddish-clay tablets with absorbing interest, for their surfaces reveal the crude material which the Hebrew writer was to fashion into a legend that has moulded the thoughts of countless millions of the human race. In the same case, marked A, as that in which the tablets bearing the creation legend are displayed may also be seen other tablets inscribed with the Assyrian version of the deluge. The Noah of that story is one named Sit-napishtim, a dweller by the Euphrates who also built his ark, and took into its shelter his wife and family and the beasts of the field, and survived the floods, and sent out a dove and a swallow and a raven when the waters subsided.

Other cases, from B to I, are stored with tablets of various kinds. There are primers of grammar and dictionaries, historical and moral works, official reports of astronomers, contracts for the sale of slaves and houses and lands, and countless letters addressed to the king and other members of the

royal family. Notwithstanding the bulk of their writing material and the labour it must have been to fill its surface with these tricky characters, the Assyrian scribes were past masters in the art of circumlocution. Here, for example, is a typical astronomical report: "To the king my lord, thy servant Ishtar-nadin-apli the chief of the astronomers of Arbela. Greeting to the king my lord. May Nabû and Marduk and Istar of Arbela be propitious unto the king my lord. We kept watch on the twenty-ninth day. The sky was cloudy and we did not see the moon." Another scribe who simply wished to remind the king that he had not answered his letter, wrote forty-two words as an introduction to his real epistle of eleven words.

There are prayers here as well as reports about the moon and contracts for the sale of slaves — prayers which would have made Diodorus arch his eyebrows. For one supplication is that of Ashur-bani-pal, and it betrays a spirit wholly at odds with the character sketch of Diodorus. Besides, if Ashur-bani-pal had been the depraved sensualist of Diodorus surely he would have ground into powder the tablet of moral precepts which warned kings against the evils that come in the train of misgovernment and injustice.

Not all the literary or historical records of ancient Assyria are shown in the cases of the Nineveh Gallery; the succession is continued at great length

in the Babylonian and Assyrian Room on the upper floor of the museum. This is the last of the apartments devoted to the antiquities of the two kingdoms, and is reserved for the smaller relics and a large selection of Babylonian inscribed bricks, boundary-stones, memorial-tablets, stone and alabaster vases, cylinder-seals, engraved stones, finger-rings, etc. The boundary-stones are well represented by the stele of Nebuchadnezzar I, king of Babylon about 1120 B. C., which is engraved with a charter and sculptured with divine emblems. The clay cylinders are numerous and vary greatly in the number of their sides; that of Sennacherib, king of Assyria, has six sides on which are inscribed accounts of eight campaigns of the king, including the siege of Jerusalem in the reign of Hezekiah, king of Judah. The record says: "The fear of the majesty of my sovereignty overwhelmed Hezekiah, and the Urbi and his trusty warriors, whom he had brought into his royal city of Jerusalem to protect it, deserted. And he dispatched after me his messenger to my royal city of Nineveh to pay tribute and to make submission with thirty talents of gold, eight hundred talents of silver, precious stones, eye-paint, ivory couches and thrones, hides and tusks, precious woods, and divers objects, a heavy treasure, together with his daughters, and the women of his palace, and male and female musicians." How startlingly this accords with the verse in Isaiah:

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STELE WITH CHARTER OF NEBUCHADNEZZAR I.

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BAKED CLAY CYLINDER OF SENNACHERIB.

"Thus saith the king of Assyria: Make an agreement with me by a present, and come out to me." And also with the lines in the second book of Kings: "And Hezekiah king of Judah sent to the king of Assyria to Lachish, saying: I have offended; return from me; that which thou puttest on me will I bear." These things account for the vigour with which the Hebrew prophets were wont to denounce Nineveh, and illustrate to how remarkable a degree the antiquities of Babylonia and Assyria augment our knowledge of the ancient world.

CHAPTER VI

PREHISTORIC MAN

In the course of his wanderings through the King's Library, the visitor to the British Museum, it will be remembered, was able to gaze upon many printed books dating back considerably more than four hundred years. Then his explorations of the Manuscript Saloon brought him face to face with ancient vellums which were written more than ten centuries ago. Even those venerable documents, however, must have lost some of their antique interest when he turned to the show-cases containing fragments of papyri with Greek handwriting of the third century before the Christian era.

But those survivals of a dim and distant past became in their turn almost contemporaneous when contrasted with Greek sculptures belonging to the sixth century B. C., which, in the visitor's backward glance, must in succession have seemed quite modern in comparison with those Egyptian relics which are attributed to a period at least four thousand years before the birth of Christ. Having reached such a far-off age, he probably came to the conclusion that his backward journey was at an end, especially if he recalled the fact that on the first page

of his Bible by the side of the first chapter of Genesis the creation of the world is definitely stated to have taken place four thousand and four years before the birth of Christ.

Alas for the precise chronology of the learned Archbishop Ussher! A passion for exactness, such as he possessed, is a laudable trait, but when that careful Irish prelate elaborated his system of Biblical chronology which clings like a limpet to all editions of the Authorized Version, he unconsciously erected for his own memory an unenviable monument. While his undoubted learning is forgotten save by students, his "4004 B. C." survives on millions of printed pages as a warning against the danger of applying arithmetic to imagination.

Doubtless Archbishop Ussher is not to be blamed for his inability to forecast the restless curiosity of modern ages. In the seventeenth century man had not developed that questioning spirit which was to characterize him in the nineteenth; his respect for ecclesiastical authority, his acceptance of theological dictum, his faith in things as they were, remained undisturbed. Not yet had he arrived at that inquiring state of mind which refuses to be satisfied even when documentary and monumental evidences of history have been exhausted. That was to come at a later age, and consequently when "4004 B. C." was inscribed by the side of the first chapter of Genesis the seventeenth-century Englishman accepted the

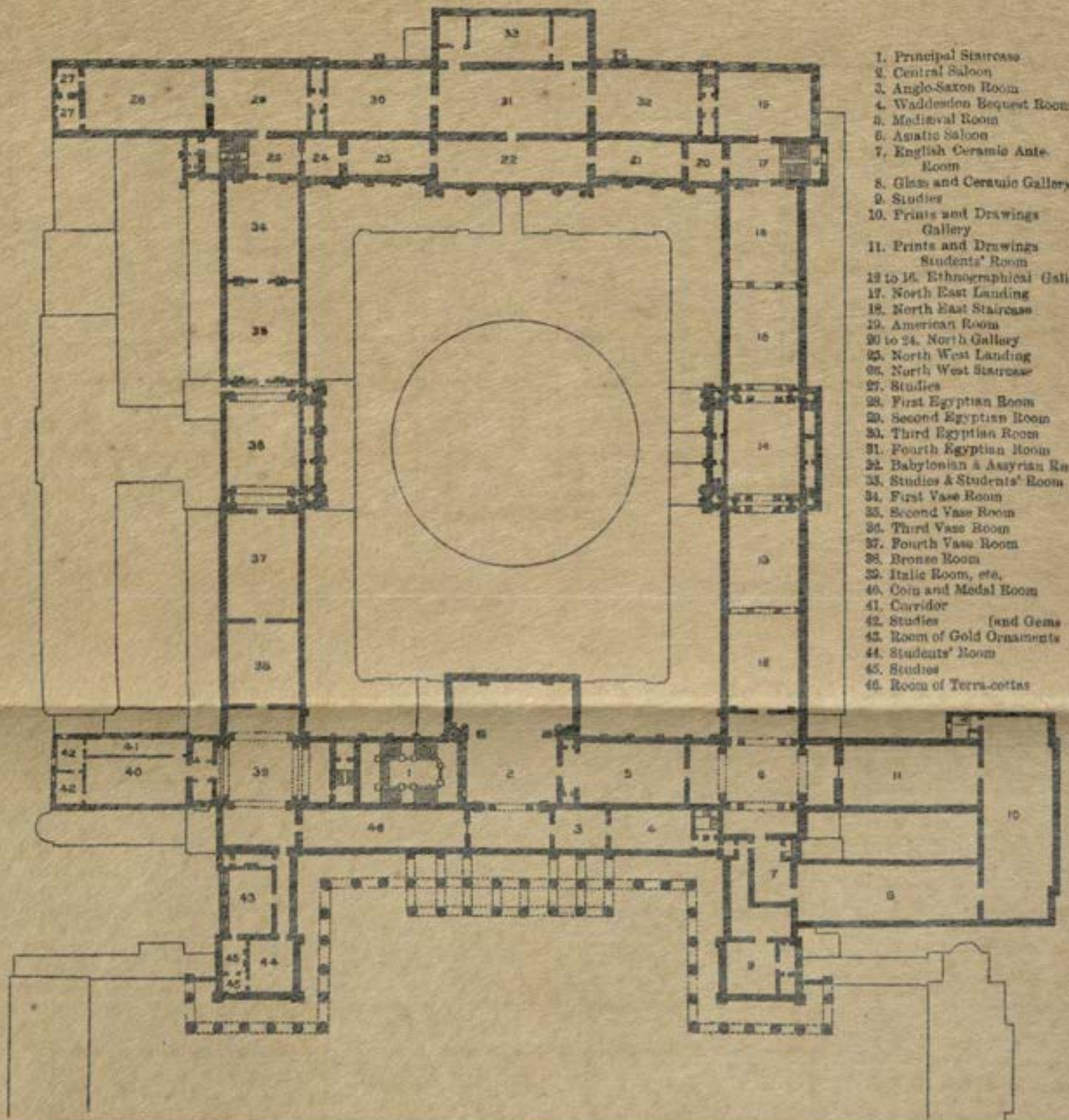
date as the last word of exact learning and bothered himself no more about the matter.

Nor was he agitated by the discovery made in London a little more than thirty years after Dr. Ussher's death. During some excavations made in Gray's Inn Lane about 1690 the workmen brought to light an elephant's tooth and a strange, pear-shaped object of flint, which the learned of those days described as a British weapon. This pointed stone, which was about two inches broad at its base and some three and a half inches long, passed into the collection of Sir Hans Sloane, and so became one of the earliest treasures of the British Museum. But for many a year its real nature was unsuspected. In fact a century and a half passed away before its likeness to other shaped flints was recognized. To-day it is held in honour as the first of its kind of which there is any record either in England or any other country.

Whoever wishes to gaze upon that historic flint will be able to gratify his desire by glancing over the contents of case 105 in the Central Saloon of the British Museum. That gallery is situated on the first floor at the head of the main staircase, and is divided into three sections, the division to the left being reserved for pre-historic antiquities, the central section for British and Romano-British antiquities, and the compartment to the right for antiquities from France. It is in the first of these divisions,

BRITISH MUSEUM.

PLAN OF THE UPPER FLOOR.



1. Principal Staircase
2. Central Saloon
3. Anglo-Saxon Room
4. Waddesdon Bequest Room
5. Mediæval Room
6. Asiatic Saloon
7. English Ceramic Ante-Room
8. Glass and Ceramic Gallery
9. Studies
10. Prints and Drawings Gallery
11. Prints and Drawings Students' Room

12 to 16. Ethnographical Gallery
17. North East Landing
18. North East Staircase
19. American Room
20 to 24. North Gallery
25. North West Landing
26. North West Staircase
27. Studies
28. First Egyptian Room
29. Second Egyptian Room
30. Third Egyptian Room
31. Fourth Egyptian Room
32. Babylonian & Assyrian Rm.
33. Studies & Students' Room
34. First Vase Room
35. Second Vase Room
36. Third Vase Room
37. Fourth Vase Room
38. Bronze Room
39. Italic Room, etc.
40. Coin and Medal Room
41. Corridor
42. Studies [and Gems
43. Room of Gold Ornaments
44. Students' Room
45. Studies
46. Room of Terra-cottas

however, that the oldest remains are exhibited, and particularly in the wall show-cases arranged around the gallery of the room. The access to this gallery is by a narrow spiral staircase on the left, at the foot of which there hangs on the wall a map of England thickly dotted with black pins. This is not a war-map, as might be imagined by the careless observer, but is intended to show the situations of the cave-dwellings of prehistoric man. Several of the black pins, it will be noticed, are dotted about the county of Devonshire, and others over the surface of Derbyshire. Before exploring the gallery upstairs the visitor should make a careful study of this map.

And he needs to remind himself emphatically of the fact that in these days man is not content with such history of his origins as is preserved in written documents or on inscribed stones. He has reached a stage where he will no longer be denied the effort to penetrate that veil of mystery which hides the beginnings of his kind. To-day, where the historian concludes his labours, the quest is taken up by other students, and notably by the archæologist and the geologist. The latter appropriates for his province the evolution of the earth towards a condition when it became suitable for the habitation of man. "The geologist," writes Professor Boyd Dawkins, "beginning his story of the earth at the time when the rains first descended and the seas first began to beat

on the coast-lines, has laid, as it were, in a map before us the revolutions in climate and geography that it has undergone. He tells of continents submerged, and of ocean bottoms lifted up to become mountains; and he points out to us that side by side with the ever-changing conditions of life there were corresponding changes in the living forms. Group after group of animals and plants pass over the field of vision, each connected with that which preceded it, and each becoming more and more highly organized, until man appears the last born as well as the highest and the noblest creature in the realm of geology."

Where the geologist ends his labours those of the archæologist begin. In this dim realm there is no room for the historian, with his dependence upon printed or written documents, or upon inscribed monuments. It is the borderland where history fades away into the prehistoric. But to appreciate the labours of the archæologist it is necessary to take a brief glimpse at the world as the geologist has pictured it. His examination of the earth's crust has led him to the conclusion that there have been four well-marked periods in its history, which he has named after the Latin numerals, that is, Primary, Secondary, Tertiary, and Quaternary, the latter representing the face of the globe as we know it to-day. But the Quaternary division is again divided into sections, consisting of historic,

prehistoric, neolithic, and palæolithic compartments. It is generally held that man does not make his appearance in the geological record prior to the palæolithic period. Some authorities contend that there are evidences of his existence in the Tertiary period, but there is no agreement on that point. What is established, however, is that he was certainly present in the palæolithic age.

From the map of the geologist the archæologist has taken two names as representing periods in the history of man, that is, palæolithic, meaning the older Stone Age, and neolithic, or the newer Stone Age. To these he added the Bronze Age and the Iron Age, which bring the story of humanity down to where it can be continued from monumental and then documentary sources. Of these periods, as Dr. James Geikie has pointed out, "the earliest was the Stone Age, when implements and ornaments were formed exclusively of stone, wood, horn, and bone. The use of metal for such purposes was then quite unknown. To the Stone Age succeeded the Age of Bronze, at which time cutting instruments, such as swords and knives and axes, began to be made of copper, and an alloy of that metal and tin. When in course of time iron replaced bronze for cutting-instruments, the Bronze Age came to an end and the Iron Age supervened." Useful as these names are, however, it must be borne in mind that they do not represent any sharp division of time; they are

rather convenient phrases representative of a general stage of attainment than scientific definitions of a rigid character. As a matter of fact, there are still races of men which are yet in the Stone Age of existence.

But it is time to return to that pear-shaped flint which was discovered in Gray's Inn Lane toward the end of the seventeenth century. As has been noted, for a century and a half it was regarded as a British weapon. Some three years before the eighteenth century ended, however, John Frere, a Norfolk antiquary, wrote a paper entitled, "On the Flint Weapons of Hoxne in Suffolk," which he assigned "to a very remote period, even beyond that of the present world." But even that startling statement created no excitement, and for another sixty years Dr. Ussher's exact chronology of the creation was unchallenged. Then came a portentous change. In the quiet little town of Abbeyville, in the valley of the river Somme, there was living a retired French physician, Boucher de Perthes, who spent his many leisure hours in the study of antiquities. Near his home the sluggish river Somme flows through a wide stretch of peat bogs, wherein from time to time the peat diggers discovered numerous strange-shaped flints which they christened "cats' tongues." Some of these curiosities were taken to M. de Perthes, who speedily came to the conclusion that they betrayed marks of human work-

manship. Interested in the discovery, he began to make investigations on his own account, which were soon rewarded by the unearthing of other similarly-shaped flints. And in a few years he acquired a large collection, which he made the subject of an essay. At first, however, his discoveries were disregarded, but in due time his collection was visited by several notable English geologists, who speedily recognized its importance as furnishing evidence of man's existence upon the earth at a period immensely anterior to Dr. Ussher's "4004 B. C."

What has to be particularly noted is that M. de Perthes found his flints in a river valley, and that the same may be said of the discovery in Gray's Inn Lane. Other early discoveries were also made in river valleys, and hence the name of "river-drift" given to the flints of the older Stone Age. "It is a remarkable fact about these river-drift implements," says S. Laing, "that they are all nearly of the same type and found under similar circumstances, that is to say, in the gravels, sands, brick-earths, and fine silt or loess deposited by rivers which have either ceased to run, or which ran at levels higher than their present ones and were only beginning to excavate their present valleys. Also they are always found in association with remains of what is known as the Quaternary (as distinguished from recent or existing fauna) represented by the mammoth or woolly-haired elephant, the

thick-nosed rhinoceros, and other well-known types of extinct animals. The general character of these implements is very rude, implying a social condition at least as low as that of the Australian savages of the present day. They consist mainly of the flake; the chopper, or pebble roughly chipped to an edge on one side; the scraper, used probably for preparing skins; pointed flints used for boring; and by far the most abundant and characteristic of all, the *hâche* or celt, a sharp or oval implement, roughly chipped from flint or, in its absence, from any of the hard stones of the district, such as chert or quartzite, and intended to be held in the hand and used without any haft or handle."

Countless examples of these river-drift implements are displayed in the gallery of the Central Saloon. They are arranged in cases 99, 100, 101, 102, 103, and others in succession to case 110. The specimens have been obtained from all parts of England, including Bedfordshire, Essex, Oxfordshire, and Dorsetshire; and also from many districts in France. The latter include an interesting series presented by M. de Perthes, which are of more than ordinary value owing to their connection with the early discoveries of the Stone Age.

As the visitor passes from case to case, he will probably, unless he is an expert, be conscious of a certain feeling of scepticism. To some extent he can hardly help sharing the incredulity of those to

whom these flints were first shown as examples of human handicraft. Many of the stones are so rudely fashioned that it is difficult to believe their forms are not due to natural causes. For the proper study of these relics, as is pointed out in the guide to the department, a knowledge of the distinction between natural and artificial fracture is necessary. But it is claimed that in nearly every case the method is unmistakable. "By natural fracture is meant the splitting of the flint by some means other than a direct blow from the hand of man; and this may occur before the flint leaves its original bed, through earth-movements that crack and produce 'faults' in the chalk." There are the factors of alternate heat and cold, or fire, or lightning, or frost, or falls from a great height — by all of which flints may be naturally fractured. But it is added that "the effect on flint of a sharp blow, such as that of a hammer, is easily recognized, and may be regarded as proof that the stone has been handled by an intelligent being. The 'bulb of percussion' is the characteristic mark of a worked flint." Yet all this does not exhaust the evidence of human workmanship. There have been discovered numerous "factories" of prehistoric man, that is, sites rich in flint where he could work on a large scale at the manufacture of his primitive implements. His rough flakes, and cores, and hammer-stones have been found in abundance just as he left

them, and not only have hundreds of flakes been fitted together again in their original position, as if they were a kind of puzzle-picture, but when on one occasion the inner portion was missing the pouring in of plaster gave a form akin to that common among the older Stone Age implements.

But the discoveries have not been confined to river valleys. On the contrary, many of the most instructive "finds" have taken place in caves. And of such discoveries few can compare in absorbing interest with those made in the famous Kent's Cavern of Devonshire. On examining the contents of case 121 the visitor will find that they consist to a large extent of objects obtained from that cave, and include implements ranging from the most primitive form up to the polished flints of the neolithic period.

As Kent's Cavern was among the first to be investigated in a scientific and cautious manner, and as an account of its excavation will throw a flood of light upon the Stone Age relics of the Central Saloon, a brief account of that work will be read with interest. The entrance is situated in the side of a small limestone hill about a mile to the east of Torquay, and the cave had been an object of curiosity so far back as 1824. From that date to 1841 it was frequently explored by the Rev. J. MacEnery, but in 1865 an exhaustive examination was undertaken by William Pengelly on behalf of the British

Association for the Advancement of Science. The work was continued for some fifteen years, during which time Mr. Pengelly visited the cave almost daily for an average period of five hours, and then continued the examination of his specimens at home often into the early morning hours.

What did all this labour disclose? First that the floor of the cave consisted of a layer of black mould in which were discovered articles of stone and bronze, mixed with the remains of a number of animals all of which are still represented by living specimens; next that beneath this black mould there was a floor of stalagmite varying in thickness from an inch to five feet, and containing relics of various extinct animals, bones and teeth of man, and flint flakes and cores; thirdly a band of black deposit four inches thick, rich in human relics and flint tools and some implements of bone; fourthly a floor of red earth abounding in animal remains of living and extinct species and relics of man's handiwork; and then a layer of crystalline stalagmite followed by what is called breccia in which were discovered flint and chert implements but of a much ruder form than those found in the red earth or the black band. But some may wonder how all this throws any light upon the antiquity of man. Well, it so happens that a visitor to the cave in 1688 inscribed his name on a boss of stalagmite in the upper floor, and although there has been a constant dripping from the roof

ever since that inscription is still perfectly legible. The film indeed is less than one-twentieth of an inch in thickness after the constant dripping of more than two hundred years. But when it is remembered that this is on the upper floor of the cave, and that there are so many stages beneath that, each representing untold centuries of slow growth, and that yet at the bottom of all there are evidences of the existence of man, it will be seen that the antiquity of man must be numbered by hundreds of thousands of years. On the lowest computation it has been estimated that the signs of human existence discovered in the lowest section of the cave date back for at least two hundred thousand years!

Do not these facts lend a thrilling interest to the contents of the gallery cases of the Central Saloon? On the surface these impassive flints may seem to have no story to tell. Unlike the Rosetta Stone, or the Assyrian clay tablets with their curious indentations, they bear not a trace of anything which might be interpreted as human writing; their virgin surfaces are utterly blank. If there had been but one discovery of such relics it might have been possible to pooh-pooh their importance, but when it is remembered that the discoveries are thousands in number, that they all tell the same tale, that their sequence is ever the same, and that the implements can be paralleled by implements still in use among

the savage races of the world, the evidence is irresistible.

That the objects displayed in the gallery and in the table cases below are eloquent of man's progress in the manufacture of implements for domestic use or for hunting will be obvious to the careful observer. He will find it an instructive task to trace the development for himself, and yet he must hardly expect to always be able to decide which belong to the older Stone Age and which to the new. In many cases, of course, there will be no question, for some of the implements are exceedingly crude. So crude, indeed, that the experts often seem in doubt as to how to describe them. It will be observed that at times they are driven to employ such phrases as "probably used for," and the like, or have to take refuge in such vague terms as "implement," "triangular implement," "flint disc," and so on. But once the river-drift stage is left behind, it becomes much easier to divine the purposes for which prehistoric man shaped these countless stones. It is not difficult to see that this was designed as a pick, that as a scraper, and these many others as spear-heads and arrow-heads, hammers, axes, daggers, and knives. And in cases 114 to 119, and in other isolated cases, the observant visitor will discover additional evidences of the progress of man. He will see, for example, numerous examples of prehistoric skill in the manufacture of javelin-heads

from reindeer horn, and bone needles, and bone piercers, and near these are little groups of perforated shells, showing that prehistoric man or woman — perhaps both — was not innocent of a weakness for personal adornment. Nay, further; it is clearly demonstrated that the cave-man was no mean artist. What he did with his time might have been a puzzle had there not been brought to light numerous examples of his prowess in drawing. In the cases last enumerated there are many specimens of cave-man art, vivid pictures of that part of his life which most appealed to his memory. His sharp flint implements provided him with admirable engraving tools, and the bones of the animals he had slain and eaten served him liberally with material on which to etch his pictures. In case 123 will be seen a piece of bone engraved with the head of a horse, which was found in the caves of Creswell in Derbyshire. It is the first trace of art in England, and shows that prehistoric man in that land possessed much the same skill in drawing as was enjoyed by his contemporaries in France and elsewhere in Europe. In the Kesserloch cavern was discovered a portion of an antler bearing a wonderfully truthful incised sketch of a buck grazing, in which, too, an attempt — the only one of its kind — has been made to represent the herbage on which the animal is feeding.

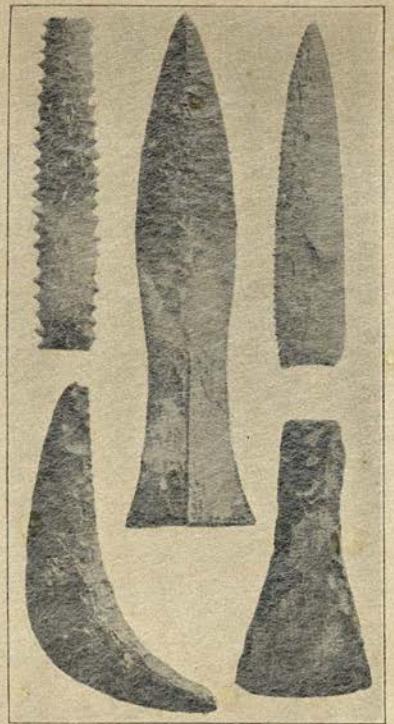
These spirited outline etchings do not exhaust the

art of the cave-man. He also tried his hand at sculpture in the round and some of the results may be seen in cases 114 and 115. The examples include a point of mammoth tusk carved into the form of a reindeer's head, and a dagger handle representing the mammoth. These both reveal a surprising skill in portraiture and a wonderful adroitness in utilizing the material employed. The animal models have been observed with close attention; the treatment is full of grace. Considering the rude tools with which he worked, the faithfulness of the cave-man's sculpture is amazing. It is obvious that he had a keen sense of the beauty of the animals he hunted, and no mean ability in reproducing their forms.

Whether neolithic man followed immediately on the heels of palæolithic man, or whether there was a transitional race, or whether palæolithic man became extinct and was then, after a long interval, succeeded by neolithic man, are questions to which no definite answer can be given. Search is now being carried on for transitional implements, but in the meantime the curious student must be satisfied to pass to those cases in the Central Saloon in which are displayed the relics now apportioned to the neolithic age, that, is the new Stone Age. They represent a period when climatic and other changes had modified the old manner of human life. "Man had now learned," remarks Reginald A. Smith in

the guide to the department, "to tame animals and train them to his domestic use; he cultivated cereals for food, and textile plants to provide material for woven garments; he used the bow as his ordinary weapon; he had developed the art of making pottery; and he often constructed dwellings raised on piles in lakes and rivers to secure himself against danger of attack. The burial of the dead now became a matter of ceremonial importance; and from the chambered sepulchral mounds (long barrows) erected over the bodies of chiefs, as well as from other megalithic monuments, we may perhaps derive evidence of the birth and increase of primitive religious beliefs. In the provision made by man for his defence and for the needs of every-day life, there had also been a great development. Implements and weapons were now commonly hafted and made in a greater variety of forms; while by the adoption of grinding and polishing, it became possible to employ other hard stones in addition to flint or quartzite."

How marked was the change which came over the weapons and implements is illustrated by countless examples. In cases 129 and 130 are some typical examples of lance and arrow-heads found in Ireland. The makers of these weapons may not have had the straightest of eyes, for they are often at fault in their lines, but it is plain that the careful manner in which the arrow-heads are shaped for



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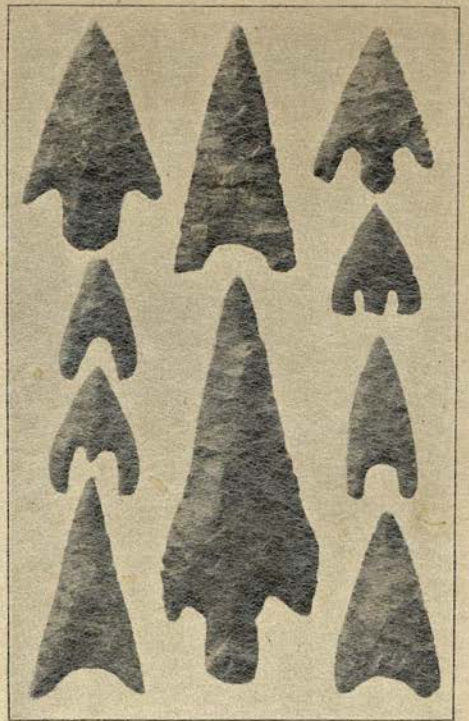
NEOLITHIC FLINT IMPLEMENTS.



NEOLITHIC LANCE AND ARROW HEADS.

fastening to their wooden shafts represents a great advance on the roughly fashioned implements of palæolithic man. And the same is true of the lance-points. In cases 143-146 are shown some remarkable flint implements from Denmark. Here is a beautifully shaped and carefully worked dagger which would do credit to man in any stage of civilization, and close at hand are scrapers and celts and chisels and sickle-shaped knives of first-rate workmanship. As illustrating the methods employed by neolithic man in making his various weapons and implements the contents of cases 125 and 126 are full of interest. They include many examples of the picks made from the antlers of deer, one of which still retains the impression of a miner's thumb in the clay which had gathered on the handle.

Further advances towards perfecting different kinds of implements are illustrated by relics from Russia, Holland, and the Nile valley. In case 150 the various stages in the manufacture of a flint armlet are illustrated by several specimens, these examples thoroughly supporting the assertion that the finest chipped flint instruments in existence come from Egypt. How wide-spread was this neolithic industry is shown by samples from Japan, India, Burmah, and other lands. As he passes from case to case, too, the visitor will note that many of the smaller weapons, and especially the arrow-heads, gradually took on a superstitious

value, as illustrated by those arrow-heads in table-case L, which have been mounted as charms or amulets. The variety of weapons seems constantly on the increase; there are harpoon-heads with flint barbs, and pierced axe-hammers, and stone adze-blades which have all the appearance of metal, and even fish-hooks. Mingling with these evidences of a more perfect provision for the chase and for the needs of domestic life are many examples of crude pottery, etc. From all these silent witnesses Dr. Boyd Dawkins has conjured up an arrestive picture of neolithic man.

"If we could in imagination take our stand on the summit of a hill commanding an extensive view, of almost any part of Great Britain or Ireland in the neolithic period, we should look upon a landscape somewhat of this kind. Thin lives of smoke rising from among the trees of the dense virgin forest at our feet would mark the position of the neolithic homesteads, and of the neighbouring stockaded camp which afforded refuge in time of need; while here and there a gleam of gold would show the small patch of ripening wheat. We enter a track in the forest, and thread our way to one of the clusters of homesteads, passing herds of goats and flocks of horned sheep, or disturbing troops of horses or small short-horn oxen, or stumbling upon a swineherd tending the hogs in their search after roots. We should probably have to defend our-

selves against the attack of some of the large dogs, used as guardians of the flock against bears, wolves, and foxes, and for hunting the wild animals. At last, on emerging into the clearing, we should see a little plot of flax or small-eared wheat, and near the homestead the inhabitants, clad some in linen and others in skins, and ornamented with necklaces and pendants of stone, bone, or pottery, carrying on their daily occupations. Some are cutting wood with stone axes with a wonderfully sharp edge, fixed in wooden handles, with stone adzes and gouges, or with little saws composed of carefully notched pieces of flint about three or four inches long, splitting it with stone wedges, scraping it with flint flakes. Some are at work preparing handles for the spears, shafts for the arrows, and wood for the bows, or for the broad paddles used for propelling the canoes. Others are busy grinding and sharpening the various stone tools, scraping skins with implements ground to a circular edge, or carving various implements out of bone and antler with sharp splinters of flint, while the women are preparing the meal with pestles and mortars and grain rubbers, and cooking it on the fire, generally outside the house, or spinning thread with spindle and distaff, or weaving it with a rude loom. We might also see them at work at the moulding of rude cups and vessels out of clay which had been carefully prepared."

An imaginary sketch, no doubt, yet each of its

details is supported by objects displayed in the Central Saloon. When they are studied with intelligence in their relation to one land alone, Great Britain for example, they illustrate the steady progress of a country without inhabitants to a country in which man first appears in the rudest form and then works his way to a more ordered and settled form of life.

Up to the present, as must have been observed, the attention of the visitor has been directed exclusively to objects made of stone or bone. Among the thousands of implements and weapons passed in review not one has been of metal. But now it is time to turn to the Bronze Age, the relics of which are displayed in the wall-cases under the gallery of the Central Saloon and in the table-cases standing on the floor. At the outset the visitor will no doubt be puzzled at this transition from stone to bronze. Does it represent a new race of men, or a discovery of the value of metal on the part of the stone-users? And why should the metal have been bronze? Why not copper or iron? These are pertinent questions, and open a field of discussion in which no final conclusions have been reached. Some authorities hold that the Bronze Age does not represent a development of the civilization of the Stone Age, but the appearance in Europe of a new race. And with regard to the arguments which have been advanced in favour of iron having preceded bronze

the answer is made that the contention is not borne out by archæological discoveries. Sir John Evans sums up the question thus: "When barrow after barrow is opened, and weapons of bronze and stone only are found accompanying the interments, and not a trace of iron or steel; when hoards of rough metal and broken bronze, together with the moulds of the bronze-founder and some of his stock-in-trade, are disinterred, and there is no trace of an iron tool among them — the presumption is strong that at the time when these men and these hoards were buried, iron was not in use."

Like the discovery of fire, which was probably man's first step towards civilization, the discovery of the use of metal belongs to an age of which there is no record. But when bronze was discovered the first use to which it was put, was the manufacture, not of swords and spears, but of the multifariously useful axe. While chronology of an exact kind is impossible in this connection, it is instructive that when the bronze antiquities of any country are examined and sorted into progressive series, the axe-forms are first in evidence. It is difficult, as has been remarked, to overestimate the work done by the axe in advancing civilization. Hence it was natural that it should be the first implement made by prehistoric man when he discovered metal. And in case 11 there may be seen a deeply interesting series illustrating the development of the bronze

axe from its stone model of the Stone Age. The earliest are evidently close copies from the stone examples, but they in time give place to designs which could never have been attempted in stone. With the advent of the bronze axe man was on the highway to greater conquests over nature than had ever been possible before. "The stone axes, easily blunted and broken, could have made but little impression on the vast forests of pine, oak, and beech covering the greater part of Britain and the Continent in the Neolithic age. Clearings necessary for pasture and agriculture must unquestionably, then, have been produced principally by the aid of fire. Under the edge of the bronze axe, clearings would be rapidly produced, pasture and arable land would begin to spread over the surface of the country." What this meant in relation to other phases of man's life must be obvious. If in the Bronze Age he could not compete with the artistic skill of his forerunners of the Stone Age, he soon advanced far beyond those primitive men in other respects. A glance round the wall-cases under the gallery and the table-cases scattered over the floor, the latter being lettered from A to S, will soon convince the visitor of the enormous strides towards civilization made in the Bronze Age. He will see weapons of all kinds, including swords, daggers, and spear-heads; articles of personal adornment, such as decorated pins, and buttons, and beads and necklaces; and

knives evidently intended for domestic use, and pottery in the form of drinking-cups, food-vessels, cinerary urns, and incense cups.

Happily, too, it is possible to almost watch the men of the Bronze Age at work. In case B are shown several moulds of prehistoric man, made of bronze and stone, and beside them are casts of other moulds preserved in different collections. With these interesting objects are shown some long ingots of copper produced by flowing the molten metal into grooves cut in stone, and there are also some lumps of copper. Such discoveries as these, many of which have been made in England, dispose of the theory that the bronze weapons and implements found in Great Britain were imported from other countries. In the next case but one, that marked D, is displayed one of the most interesting groups of the collection. In a cave in County Durham, hunters came upon a set of bronze weapons and implements which were evidently the belongings of one family, who may have fled to the cave for refuge and there met their death. The objects include a spear-head, knives, razors, chisels, awls, pins, rings, and a bronze mould. They belong, it is thought, to the time when the Bronze Age in England had reached its highest development.

Many countries are represented in the various cases, including Ireland, India, Germany, Hungary, Denmark, Russia, Italy, the Greek Islands, Egypt,

France, and Switzerland. The "finds" in the latter country, which are shown in case S, include numerous objects from lake-dwellings, such as knives, razors, chisels, fish-hooks, and pottery. As belonging to records of the Bronze Age special note should be taken of the six cases in the centre of the Saloon containing the Greenwell collection presented to the museum by J. Pierpont Morgan. It is one of the most notable collections in existence and is remarkable for the wide geographical area covered by its numerous objects.

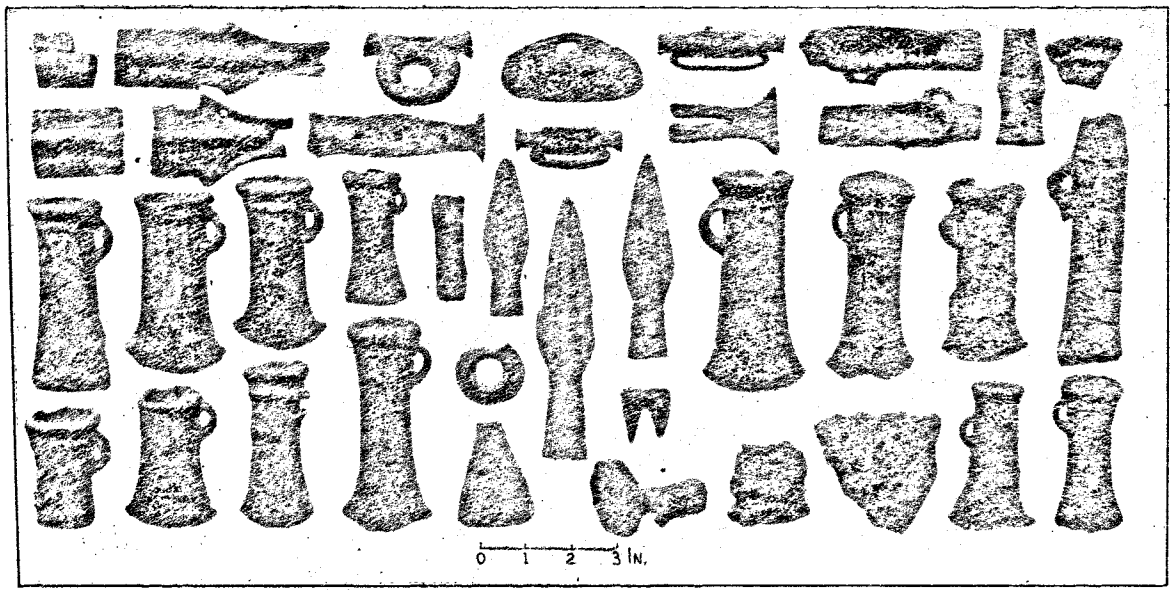
When iron was discovered is as much a mystery as the date of the discovery of bronze. The superior merits of the former metal render it unthinkable that any race acquainted with it should have returned to the use of bronze, and consequently there is ample foundation for making the dawn of the Iron Age the close of man's prehistoric period. Roughly speaking the introduction of iron is placed somewhere about one thousand years before Christ, though of course the date will vary with different countries. In various cases of the Central Saloon, and notably in the wall-cases 51 to 60, the early Iron Age is strikingly illustrated by varied collections. There are swords and their scabbards, chariot-wheels, ornaments, and all kinds of implements. Of course there was much over-lapping between the two ages, for the use of bronze would not be immediately abandoned. Rather, it

was reserved for more ornamental uses, the harder metal being employed for weapons and implements likely to be put to greater tests. Hence the visitor must not be surprised to find bronze persisting in the Iron Age for brooches, bracelets, hairpins, and many other articles.

It seems fairly well established that with the introduction of iron changes gradually took place in the burial customs of prehistoric man. The old method of cremation was not wholly abandoned, but it became increasingly common to inter the dead unburned in stone chambers or shallow pits and with them were buried many of the objects associated with their living days. These changing customs find ample illustration among the antiquities of the Iron Age, which, by the way, include some remarkable collections from different districts of France. Many of the latter, too, pass beyond the prehistoric period of man's history, and thus become an instructive link between the past and the present. In the case of Great Britain, too, the relics of the Saloon as a whole include survivals from the period of Roman occupation. There are countless objects which were either brought to Britain by the soldiers of Julius Cæsar or made by them in the country after their arrival. They have been found in various parts of England, including London, Winchester, Colchester, and the sites of other Roman stations, and include keys, and spoons,

and mirrors, and bronze vessels, and numerous other articles.

Eminently appropriate is it that these collections devoted to illustrating the life of prehistoric man should shade off in this way to a period where the haziness of the far-off past should begin to give place to the light of clear knowledge. With the invasion of Julius Cæsar, Britain was brought into touch with that civilization which had been progressing for many centuries in other parts of the world, and henceforward its prehistoric period was at an end. The Roman historians have left us many pictures of what kind of people the early Britons were, of their villages and towns, of their ways of life and their personal appearance, but after all the mute witnesses of the countless objects in the Central Saloon are of still greater interest to the inquiring student. They may not have the exactitude of written history or inscribed monuments, but they are so suggestive of primitive life and afford such convincing proofs of the onward march of man that they must always retain a unique place in the annals of mankind.



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HOARD OF BRONZE.

By Permission of the Trustees of the British Museum.

BRITISH SEPULCHRAL POTTERY.

CHAPTER VII

CIVILIZATION IN THE MAKING

THAN the Ethnographical Gallery of the British Museum there is no department the educational significance of which is so likely to be unappreciated. With the possible exception of the Egyptian mummy rooms, the ten bays and numerous cases in which are exhibited the objects illustrating the manners and customs of what are known as savage races seem to hold most attraction for the majority of visitors. On the quietest days there are always little groups in this gallery, indulging usually in laughter and jokes. The impression seems general that is the really comic side of the museum; not intended for instruction but solely for amusement.

Perhaps the hilarity with which the ordinary visitor regards the object-lessons of ethnography arises from his overweening conceit of the value and importance of his own particular form of civilization. No doubt he has much in common with that traveller who lost his way on his journey and described the climax of his experience in these words: "After having walked eleven hours without having traced the print of a human foot, to my great comfort and delight, I saw a man hanging upon a gib-

bet; my pleasure at the cheering prospect was inexpressible, for it convinced me that I was in a civilized country." Finding, as he wanders from case to case, everything so alien to what he is accustomed to, the thoughtless visitor preens himself upon the superiority of his own environments and concludes that the grotesque idols, the rude clothing, the primitive weapons and implements, and the vulgar ornaments of savage man, are fit subjects for ridicule and merriment.

But the more philosophical observer will regard these strange objects in quite another mood. He will hardly fail to recall those hours of depression or foiled endeavour when he has questioned whether, after all, civilization is not a failure, and whether he might not find greater happiness in some far-off island of the sunny Southern seas.

"There methinks would be enjoyment more than in this march of mind,
In the steamship, in the railway, in the thoughts that shake mankind.

"There the passions cramp'd no longer shall have scope and breathing space;
I will take some savage woman, she shall rear my dusky race."

He may not have had personal experience of the "breadths of tropic shade," of the "lustrous woodland," of the "summer isles of Eden," but, overweighted with the stress of his own civilization, he may easily pine for a life less hedged round with

convention, and long to "burst all links of habit." But to this mood there may, on reflection, succeed that other point of view which Lecky put on record: "The superiority of a highly civilized man lies chiefly in the fact that he belongs to a higher order of being, for he has approached more nearly to the end of his existence, and has called into action a large number of his capacities. And this is in itself an end. Even if, as is not improbable, the lower animals are happier than man, and semi-barbarians than civilized men, still it is better to be a man than a brute, better to be born amid the fierce struggles of civilization than in some stranded nation apart from all the flow of enterprise and knowledge." Something more than mere amusement, then, should be derived from these relics of uncivilized man; in fact, the extent to which they minister to merriment may be the measure of the laugher's own lack of civilization.

For the multifarious objects in the Ethnographical Gallery represent so many starting-points in the world's civilization. Their true value is to afford the visitor to the museum an opportunity of experiencing the feeling which came over Darwin when he first found himself face to face with barbaric man. "The astonishment which I felt," he wrote, "on first seeing a party of Fuegians on a wild and broken shore will never be forgotten by me, for the reflection at once rushed into my mind — such were

our ancestors. These men were absolutely naked and bedaubed with paint, their long hair was tangled, their mouths frothed with excitement, and their expression was wild and distrustful. They possessed hardly any arts, and like wild animals lived on what they could catch; they had no government, and were merciless to every one not of their own tribe." Darwin drew from his experience the moral that he would sooner be descended from a "heroic little monkey" than from such beings; it is just as legitimate and perhaps more conducive to humility to deduce the lesson that but for civilization our own case would be as deplorable as that of the Fuegians.

Accustomed from the earliest dawn of consciousness to the heritage of the centuries, the natives of civilized lands rarely pause to consider what their environments represent of human conflict and discovery. They take for granted the ample food of their tables, the generous shelter and comfort of their homes, the protection and adornment of their clothing, the æsthetic pleasure of the arts, the happiness of family life, the security of their communal relations with their kind, not realizing that all these things have been wrested one by one from the antagonism of nature and the inhumanity of man to man. For all such the objects displayed in the Ethnographical Gallery are rich in suggestion. They are intimately linked with the present, for, as Dr. E. B. Tylor has remarked, every human thought, no

matter how primitive, has a bearing upon the thought of the day; none is so ancient that it has severed its connection with modern life.

Representing as it does the spoils of four continents, namely Asia, Oceania, Africa and America, it is obvious that the arrangement of the Ethnographical Gallery must of necessity be geographical. Chronology, then, must for once be thrown to the winds; the only sequence is that of place. The gallery is on the upper floor of the museum, and runs the entire length of the eastern side. By means of the tall wall-cases which project into the room at certain intervals the apartment is divided into a series of ten bays, five on each side of the gallery; and in addition there are numerous table-cases and standard cases and screens, the contents of which harmonize as far as possible with those of the bays in their vicinity. The only inconvenience of the arrangement is that owing to the bays being paired, the numbering of the cases is misleading. Thus the objects from Asia begin in the first bay on the left, and are continued in the first bay on the right, but as the numbering of the cases runs up the gallery and not in a criss-cross manner, the consequence is that while the first wall-cases of Asiatic objects are numbered 1 to 17, the continuing cases are numbered 149 to 166. To cite numbers of cases, then, will be of no assistance to the explorer; he must bear in mind that the relics from a given continent are to be

looked for on either side of the gallery and in the centre, and that the geographical order of the bays is that given above, that is, Asia, Oceania, Africa, America. In addition, owing to the constant re-arrangement of the cases necessitated by fresh acquisitions, it would be misleading to locate specific objects in specific cases; the only safe indication is to point out the division of the earth's surface to which certain specimens belong.

As it would entail much passing to and fro in the gallery to study its objects in a comparative way, the explorer will doubtless find it the wisest plan to frame for himself a few general principles for which he can seek out illustrations in the specimens of the different continents. He may think, for example, as the handbook to the department suggests, of man in relation to nature, then of man in connection with human nature, and lastly of man in his attitude to supernature. This is a better division than that of Aristotle, namely, personality, property, and the estimation of others. It is more useful to start where Epicurus begins, that is, with those natural and necessary needs of man which when not satisfied produce pain. That makes the starting point to be hunger and its satisfaction, — hunger which, as the Persian proverb has it, is "the teacher of arts and the bestower of genius."

So far as the untutored natives of Asia are concerned the food favoured by those people ranges

from fish to game and includes the milk of mares and camels, reindeer products, beans and millet and potatoes, turtle and wild pig, rice and sugar-cane, and honey and yams. And the objects associated with the satisfying of the first and chief need of man embrace a curiously carved wooden stick used by the Ainus for raising the moustache when drinking, and many quaint implements for making fire. Examples of the crude flint and steel used in Burmah are not lacking, and there is a specimen of the ingenious fire-piston of Borneo. This consists of a small cylinder something like a garden syringe, with a closely-fitting piston, the friction of which in the cylinder generates heat and fires a piece of tinder carried in a hole at the end of the piston. From Tibet comes an ornate little pouch designed for carrying flint and tinder, while the Sumatra curiosities include a brass belt from which a fire-steel is suspended.

Objects associated with the food of barbaric man are more fully illustrated in the exhibits from Oceania. These range from the poi pounders of Polynesia to the elaborately decorated food-funnel of New Zealand. There are several examples of food bowls, one, wooden and inlaid with shell, from the Pelew Islands; another, also of wood and inlaid with shell and bone, from the Hawaiian Islands; and a cleverly carved wooden vessel from the Solomon Islands. All these were evidently intended for

individual use, but the Solomon Islands are also represented by two huge food bowls which have adorned many a cannibal feast. They are so capacious that they would easily find room for all the fleshy parts of a human victim, and have all the appearance of having been put to constant use. When one recalls the history of the Solomon Islands, the murder of missionaries and the disappearance of Benjamin Boyd, and the penchant of the natives for head hunting, it is not difficult to conjure up a vision of a group of loathsome cannibals at their gruesome feast around these bowls. On the other hand the carved funnel from New Zealand has a curious interest. It represents in a partial manner that habit of fasting for various reasons which is so widespread among uncivilized tribes. So much importance is attached by the Maori chiefs to the correct manner in which tattooing is carried out that while the process is in execution they will take only such food as can be supplied to them through a funnel. This is an interesting illustration of the belief in the efficacy of fasting in connection with the performance of a magical or religious ceremony. As fasting or abstention from certain kinds of food at particular seasons enters so largely into the rule of some divisions of the Christian Church, this food-funnel becomes an object for serious thought rather than ridicule.

Africa supplies many objects connected with the

food of its natives. The Congo is responsible for minutely carved wooden cups of varied designs; and Uganda is represented by a milk-vessel and an ingenious pottery furnace for fumigating the same. The latter is of unique interest as showing that even savages may arrive at some kind of sanitary knowledge. The little furnace takes the form of a round bowl ending in a tapering neck, the side of the bowl having a hole in which the fumigating grass can be placed and ignited. The milk-vessel also has a tapering neck, but large enough to fit over that of the furnace. It is a clever arrangement and is probably as effective as the more scientific appliances of the civilized dairy. American food vessels are represented by a handsomely carved wooden bowl from Queen Charlotte Islands and an Iquitos pottery vase for holding cassava-wine. In connection with the latter, too, it should be noted that the American exhibits include an example of the board studded with stone chips which is used for grating cassava.

As bearing upon man's efforts to satisfy his hunger it will be observed that all the continents provide numerous examples of the devices used to catch fish and all kinds of wild animals. The fish-hooks of different tribes are a study in themselves, the simplest of which have a close family likeness to the bent pin of the boy who is new to the gentle art. Those from Oceania show that while the natives of the Solomon Islands had learned the neces-

sity of giving a pronounced inward curve to their hooks, the fishermen of Hawaii had gone a step further and added the barb. From Tonga is a huge hook made of whale's bone, turtle-shell and pearl-shell; from New Zealand are bone and shell hooks in which the barb is in a rudimentary stage; while the Indians of the northwest coast of America are represented by some business-like devices which must have been fatal to any fish that took them into their mouths. Some of these hooks are cleverly pointed with bird's claws, but most of them are equipped with sharp pieces of bone.

Savage man so quickly turned his hunting weapons against his own kind that it is difficult to distinguish between those intended for the slaughter of game and those reserved for an enemy's body, but it is no doubt safe to include in the food-capturing category many of the simplest forms of bows and arrows, and spears, and missile weapons. To these must in the main be added the blow-guns of the Kenyahs and other tribes. The blow-gun seems to be widely spread among uncivilized races, and the visitor will come upon examples in most of the bays in the gallery. There are numerous specimens from the Malay Peninsula, which are accompanied by many types of quivers for the darts, most of which are carefully decorated. The long bow of the Andaman Islander, with its iron-tipped arrow, must have been a formidable weapon for the chase

or battle, and the harpoon used for capturing turtle or large fish looks as though it should have been particularly effective. In different parts of the gallery the visitor will find numerous examples of traps, some intended for rats, but the majority designed for the capture of fish. The latter are not strikingly different from the wicker traps used by civilized man.

Cooking-pots are generously illustrated, and the devotees of afternoon tea should take special interest in the curious churn used by the Tibetans for brewing the cup that cheers but not inebriates. The entire process is exemplified by samples of the kettle, strainer, and churn alluded to in the following description from the handbook to the gallery: "'Brick Tea' is first pounded in a mortar and then placed in a kettle of hot water which is allowed to boil for five minutes. It is then poured through a small wicker-work strainer into a long wooden cylinder or 'tea-churn' provided with a piston. A piece of butter and some parched barley are now added, and the whole is vigorously churned for a minute or two, after which it is poured into a teapot of red earthenware or tinned copper. Each person then produces from the bosom of his gown a little wooden bowl, lined or otherwise ornamented with silver. A little tea is then sprinkled as a libation, and the cups are filled. Taking with his fingers a lump of butter from a bladder or wooden butter-box, the

drinker lets it melt in his bowl, drinking some of the tea, and blowing the butter on one side. When only a little tea is left in the bottom of the bowl, a handful of barley-meal is added, and the various ingredients are worked with the fingers into a lump of brown dough which is swallowed and washed down with a fresh draught." If the English "four o'clock" ceremony had not developed considerably beyond the messy process in which the Tibetan delights, Parisians would doubtless have shunned that form of Anglomania at all costs.

Alien to civilized ideas as are the feeding-funnel of the Maoris, and the cannibal feast-bowl of the Solomon Islanders, the explorer of the gallery will discover one proof of the kinship of barbaric and civilized man. Whether the savage indulged in the adulteration of food is not illustrated by these objects, but that he was not ignorant of the devices of the manipulator of weights and measures is proved beyond question. Among the articles from Borneo is a measure used for selling rice, and a fraudulent measure at that, for it has numerous holes in the bottom, the purpose of which was to cheat the purchaser of his rightful quantity.

According to Epicurus, the second great natural need of man is clothing. That depends. There are of course some parts of the globe where the constant heat of the sun puts the question of clothing entirely beyond the pale of necessary things, so long;

that is, as the question of decency and indecency does not arise. As *ex nihilo nihil fit,* it would be a work of supererogation to search the gallery for examples of the wardrobe of those tribes which have no wardrobe; but it is exceedingly rich in specimens of uncivilized garments, from the scanty loincloth to the superabundant ceremonial dress. Nay, in the Asiatic section the gallery has a marvellous collection of Oriental armour, including a steel helmet of a Shah of Persia and a suit of iron scale-armour from Tibet. These, however, and the wonderful range of Oriental weapons — swords and daggers and battle-axes — by which they are accompanied, are of less interest in the present connection than the ruder garments which illustrate the early stages of man's efforts to supply himself with an outer covering.

Although somewhat transparent, tattooing must probably be given the first place in the wardrobe of barbaric man. Tahiti provides a set of tattooing instruments, which include a vicious looking needle and a paddle-shaped striker used to drive the needle home. The mask of a Haida woman from Queen Charlotte Islands shows an intricate tattoo pattern, and the curious in such matters will find further examples in the dried Maori heads from New Zealand. Coming to more substantial wearing apparel, the gallery is well equipped with garments of all kinds, ranging from the abbreviated bark-belt worn

by men in N. W. Australia to the ample ceremonial robes from Tahiti. Between these are such types as the feather head-dress of the Masai, the bark hats of Alaska Indians, and the gorgeous red and yellow feather cloaks affected by the chiefs of Hawaii. Bark-cloth plays so large a part in the tailoring of savage man that a description of its manufacture will be read with interest, especially as the process is so much akin to the method adopted by the Egyptians in making papyrus. "The branches and roots of straight young saplings, usually of the Paper Mulberry, but sometimes of other trees," states the handbook to the department in giving an account of the method adopted in Polynesia, "were cut off, and the bark detached in long strips. These strips were then immersed in water for several hours, and when they were sufficiently soaked were taken out and laid on a flat piece of wood. The inner bark was now detached from the outer by scraping with a piece of shell, and carefully washed. The strips were laid out side by side until they covered a space of the required size, three layers being placed one above the other. They were left thus until the following day, by which time the percolation of the water which they had absorbed through the washing caused them to adhere together. The whole piece was now taken to a flattened beam or board, and beaten or felted together by repeated blows from short mallets of hard wood,

the sides of which are usually grooved in different ways. During this operation water was continually thrown upon the cloth. When the piece had been felted to a uniform consistency, it was dried, and finally ornamented with coloured designs, either applied with the free hand, or more rarely by means of large frames or stamps, as in Samoa and Fiji." In the Oceania division the visitor will find interesting examples of the blocks used for printing patterns on bark-cloth, and will doubtless make a mental comparison between those primitive appliances and the elaborate cloth-printing machines of his own world. If he shares Ruskin's passion for individualism in artistic work, the comparison may not be wholly to the detriment of barbaric man.

Even more pains must have been spent on the manufacture of the red and yellow feather cloaks used by the Hawaiian chiefs, many admirable examples of which are in the Oceania bays. As the feathers are fastened to a groundwork of net, the process of completing a cloak must be lengthy and tedious. The amount of labour, too, expended upon such an involved garment as the ceremonial dress worn at burials in Tahiti must be considerable. On a first glance this robe may seem ludicrous, with its porcupine-looking headpiece, and its suggestion of the scarecrow figures of corn-fields, but, after all, is it in the abstract more inartistic than some of the gorgeous regalia favoured by some friendly

societies? Everything depends upon custom, and to the native of Tahiti the sashes and medals of friendly societies may appear just as grotesque as his ceremonial dress does to the civilized man.

From dress to personal ornaments is a natural transition. In this department the gallery can show some fashions which are hardly likely to set the style in Europe or the United States. Asia, for example, provides a human skull painted and decorated as worn by a friend of the deceased in token of his affection. This is an Andaman Islands custom, and it is reassuring to learn that those who observe it are rapidly becoming extinct. More tolerable is the brass brooch worn by the women of Western Tibet, though their sisters in civilized lands would probably vote it a trifle too bulky and heavy. From Assam there are slighter ornaments, such as necklaces of shell and glass beads and a brass head band with shell pendants, while the African bays illustrate in a generous manner those formidable nose and ear ornaments in which the natives of the dark continent take so much æsthetic pleasure. The American specimens include some ornate feather tiaras and several rudely-carved hair-combs.

That savage man is not oblivious to the play-instinct is demonstrated at every turn. Tlie Javanese are particularly addicted to puppet-shows, an amusement which has furnished the gallery with a

large collection of quaint figures and masks; in Oceania idle hours are devoted to cat's-cradle, to tops and balls, and numerous "make believe" games; while in Africa the gentle savage indulges in a form of backgammon. Dancing, of course, plays a large part in the recreation of untutored man, and the gallery is naturally rich in objects relating to that amusement. The dancing-clubs include a high ornamented specimen from the Santa Cruz group, wooden shields worn at dances by natives of East Africa, and a wooden bear-headed dancing-rattle from the Queen Charlotte Islands. The native musical instruments, too, are beyond counting. The xylophone appears in an elaborate form among the Java objects, while Africa is well to the fore with lizard-skin drums, wooden gongs, primitive harps, and "pianos" which usually have gourd resonators but sometimes fall back on a human skull for that purpose. Not without surprise will the visitor note that the Azandeh tribe of the Congo have evolved a musical instrument which has a strong resemblance to the fiddle, though the melody produced may have little kinship with the efforts of a Paganini.

Owing to considerations of space the gallery is not able to exhibit much by way of illustrating the houses affected by savage man. However, there are several attractive little models of the varied types of habitations characteristic of different parts

of the world, and the Oceania section is notably well equipped with examples of Maori houses and the rich carving with which they are adorned. Apart from the models, however, it should be noted that on the screens down the centre of the gallery are numerous large photographs of native scenes, many of which are full of information as to the dwellings favoured in different lands. Some of the wall-cases, too, in addition to exhibiting maps of the countries from which the objects shown have been gathered, display numerous little sketches from which a good idea of the aspect of native villages can be obtained.

To the trained eye countless objects in the various bays will suggest much information as to the communal relations of uncivilized tribes; if the visitor is well read in Maine's "Ancient Law" and kindred books he will find something to interest him at every turn. Even such a seemingly unrelated object as the wooden figure from the Congo which is used for purposes of divination is really communal in its suggestion, for it implies disagreement between men and so opens up the way to the question of ordeals and oaths. Again, the fine collection of African currency is a reminder that the savages using these curious coins — such as conventional axe-blades and hoe-blades — were not living to themselves alone, but had reached a stage when their relations with their fellows were such as

to render necessary a standard of value, no matter how crude that standard may seem. Of course the original trader at first made a direct exchange of definite objects, but in time there arose the need of formulating some system which would obviate the bother of driving around an ox or a sheep. But it is too plain from the innumerable weapons in the gallery that in the main savage man's relations with his kind were generally those of antagonism. Darwin noted that the Fuegians were merciless to every one not of their tribe, and the same is probably true of most uncivilized races. Hence the brutal looking clubs from Fiji, the murderous war-adzes from New Zealand, and the deadly swords and daggers of the Orient, the vicious blowgun of the Kenyahs, the lethal spears of the Polynesians, and the multifarious shields which keep them company. The ostrich-feather head-dress of Masai warriors is a pertinent reminder that that tribe has advanced so far towards civilization that it has developed a regular military system and may be said to have a "standing army." Yet lest the visitor should carry away a wrong impression from all these implements of slaughter, it is seemly to recall Dr. Tylor's assertion that "no known tribe, however low or ferocious, has ever admitted that men may kill one another indiscriminately." That is, the savage can generally produce a reason for going out to murder his kind, which, to the cynic,

may seem another proof that after all he is not so far removed from what is known as civilization.

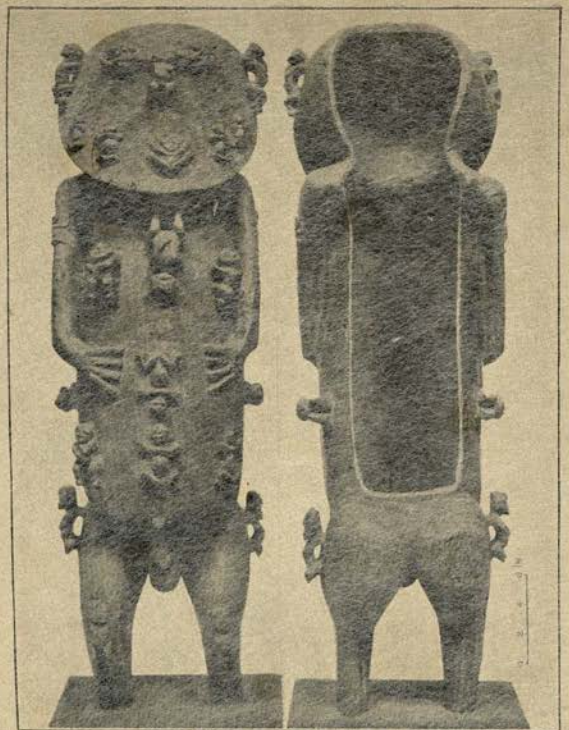
All the objects alluded to in the foregoing pages have been connected with man's relations to nature or to his own kind; there are countless other exhibits which bear upon his attitude to the supernatural. They illustrate conclusively that uncivilized man makes a distinction between extraordinary and every-day occurrences and the unusual and ordinary objects of nature, and that those which cannot be accounted for fill him with mysterious awe. It is quite possible, then, to imagine the gallery becoming a battlefield among the theorists who hold diverse views as to the origin of religion. As the semi-infinite aspects of nature, and the infinite aspects, such as the seen but unapproachable moon and sun, cannot be illustrated here, there is nothing to support Max Müller's theory that, given man such as he is, with his five senses such as they are, and nature such as it is, then religion is a natural growth. On the other hand the views of those who hold that all religion is a development from the worship of the dead are exemplified to a certain extent. For example, in the African section of the gallery the visitor will observe a strange-looking three-mouthed drinking vessel from Uganda, which was used at human sacrifices. The theory of the tribe postulates that the spirit of their victim might after death be all-powerful to work them injury, and

hence before he is slain he is given a draught from this vessel, the object of which is to kill his soul. From Oceania come the curious ancestral figures which are intimately related to the theory of ancestral worship.

So far as savage man gives visible shape to his conceptions of the powers of the supernatural world, it will be concluded from an inspection of the numerous idols in the gallery that those conceptions are not flattering to his deities. Nearly all the figures are hopelessly grotesque and hideous. The wooden image used in the Nicobar Islands for scaring away evil spirits, the wooden figure taken from a sacred enclosure in Hawaii, the effigy of Tangaroa, the Polynesian sea-god, the war-gods of red feather from the Hawaiian Islands, the fetish from the Congo, the monster from Mendiland, and many other specimens, are all of unrelieved ugliness according to the notions of the civilized world. But that is the savage way all over the world; it is the unusual or the grotesque which is selected for worship. Hence it must not be hastily concluded that the wooden carved figure of Tangaroa, with its abortion of a head, its four-fingered hands, and its unrecognizable little figures, symbolical of the god in the act of creating other gods and men, is insulting to the physical qualities of that god. And it is betraying a sad lack of appreciation of the mental processes of savage man to see cause for laughter

only in the numerous red feather-work war-gods of Hawaii. The mouths of these deities are certainly capacious and well filled with teeth, and their eyes of plates of pearl-shell adorned with wooden pupils are undoubtedly obtrusive, but all this is intentional and in keeping with the savage idea that what is unusual must be placated in some way or another. Of course these figures are ludicrous to those who have been taught that God is a spirit, and that He is one instead of many, but in their crude way they speak of the groping of man after God if haply he might find Him. And it might be added that in their apparently repulsive aspects they are not so far removed from conceptions of the divine nature which have been held even by civilized men.

Juvenile visitors to the gallery, and especially those who are fresh from the pages of "Robinson Crusoe," find much to interest them in the various canoes and models of canoes which are specially prominent in the Oceania bays. They are of all types, from the highly-finished vessels of New Zealand to the less ornate but equally useful models from Tahiti. The latter include examples of the single and double canoe, many of which are adorned with sternposts carved with the figure of a god. The Micronesians were skilful boat-builders, and their business on the great waters led them to construct charts of an exceedingly ingenious kind. One from the Marshall Islands deserves special atten-



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WOODEN FIGURE OF TANGAROA.

CONTEMPORARY PORTRAIT-FIGURE FROM THE CONGO.

tion. It is made of open cane-work, to which small shells are attached here and there to indicate the position of the islands. Nor is that all. It will be observed that the chart is crossed in different places with bent strips of cane, which represented the direction of the prevailing winds. To the modern navigator it may seem a primitive form of chart, but that it served its purpose is proved by the fact that the Micronesians made many voyages of a daring nature. A recent traveller in New Guinea has placed on record the fact that some natives in their canoes were able in a few minutes to overtake a steamer of modern construction.

As even in the civilized world it is often difficult to decide where textile craftsmanship shades off into art, it is not surprising that it is still more of a puzzle to distinguish the two in the work of savage man. Many of the objects already mentioned are remarkable for the manner in which they are decorated, for there is hardly an object made by native tribes which has not some kind of adornment. The boomerangs of Australia, the clubs of Fiji, the shields of New Guinea, the priestly staves of Sumatra, the house-boards of Borneo, the drums from the Congo — all these and countless other objects are notable for the skill of their carving and other decoration. It has been shown in a previous chapter that even prehistoric man sought some outlet for his artistic feelings, and it is not surprising that

savages dwelling amid environments conducive to a less stressful life turned to the decoration of their belongings as an enjoyable occupation.

Early pottery is of course rudely shaped, but once the potter had mastered the utilitarian side of his craft he seems to have devoted his attention naturally to an expression of his ideas of the beautiful. The vases from Uganda illustrate how savage man went to nature for his models of form, for their shape is reminiscent of the gourd; and it was to nature also that the savage looked for his decorations, as is obvious from the many ornaments which have been copied from the insect world or from the shapes of leaves and flowers. The Maori specimens of native art are particularly striking. The carved figure-head of a canoe would tax the skill of a civilized craftsman, and the jade ornaments exhibited on one of the screens are finished in a masterly manner. What, too, could be more effective than the carving on the clubs and dancing-shields from New Guinea, or the minute detail of the shale pipe from Queen Charlotte Islands? If all these examples are to be regarded as merely applied decoration, the contemporary portrait-figure of Bope Pelenge from the Kasai district of the Congo is a convincing proof that savage man is capable of establishing a claim to be considered an artist. There is no denying the assertion that "the art of the Bushongo is remarkable: not only are their wood-carvings exceed-

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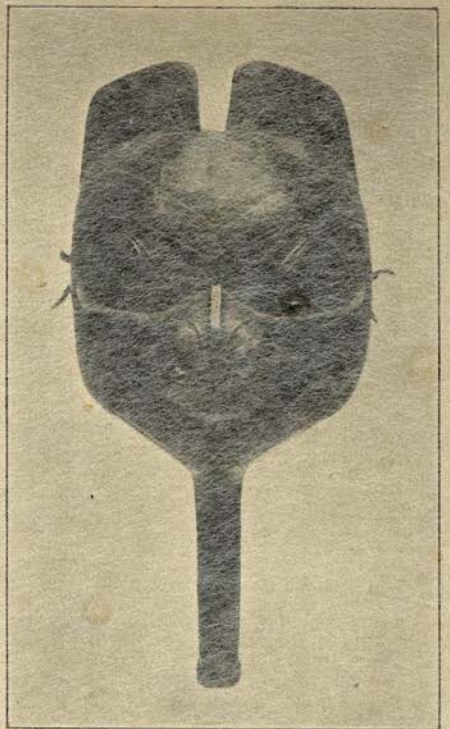
CLUBS AND DANCING-SHIELD FROM NEW GUINEA.



WOODEN DANCING-RATTLE FROM QUEEN CHARLOTTE ISLANDS.

ingly graceful in outline and covered with patterns of singular beauty, similar to the embroidered designs on their cloth (which often recall our 'Late Keltic' period), but the art of portraiture is practised amongst them, and the wooden statues of their early kings are the most striking products of indigenous African art."

Perhaps, however, the most astonishing examples of native art are provided by the remarkable bronze castings from the city of Benin in British West Africa. They were acquired by the museum as the result of a primitive expedition in 1897. Early in that year the consul-general and a party of Europeans were ruthlessly massacred, but their deaths were speedily avenged by a British force, which also brought away the numerous plaques and other works of art exhibited in one of the wall-cases and several of the central screens of the gallery.

Although of pure negro descent, the Beni proved apt pupils when, in the sixteenth century, they were taught the art of casting in metal by the Portuguese. A native account of the event sets forth how "when the white men came, in the time when Esige was king, a man named Ahammangiwa came with them. He made brasswork and plaques for the king, he stayed a very long time — he had many wives but no children — the king gave him plenty of boys to teach. We can make brasswork now, but not as he made it, because he and all his boys are dead."

Perhaps that unidentified "white man," or one of the most apt of his pupils, was responsible for the striking head of a young woman which is a conspicuous object among the Benin treasures. It is obvious that it belongs to an earlier period than most of the plaques, for the modelling and casting are alike admirable. The conical head-dress of coral, with its coral pendants, and the necklace, are not more carefully finished than the four cicatrices over each eyebrow, or the details of the eyes, nose, and mouth.

Judging from the evidence furnished by the bronzes, which is strengthened by the information of an officer who has been on active duty in the city, the Benin plaques were produced by the wax process of casting. The model to be reproduced is first carefully finished in wax, and then gradually coated with clay in a liquid state until by successive layers a sufficiently substantial mould has been made. Then, when the whole is thoroughly dry and hard, a hole is made in the clay and the wax inside run off by the application of heat. The same hole is used for the pouring in of the molten metal, and when that has cooled the outer covering is broken off. That, notwithstanding the death of their original tutor and his first pupils, the Beni have retained remarkable skill in manipulating the process is demonstrated by these numerous examples of their work. The plaques include many representa-

tions of European figures, which are of great value for the information they give as to the dress, weapons, and ornaments affected by the Portuguese of the sixteenth century. And the figures of the king of Benin and his various attendants are not less interesting. It is agreed that all these bronzes are of native production throughout and hence they are extremely valuable as illustrating the latent artistic capacity of uncivilized man. As might be expected, there is a certain crudeness about the drawing, and proportion is rarely well observed, but that the bronzes are instinct with spirit and show keen observation on the part of the artists will be generally admitted. The animals and fishes are more than conventional creatures, and the transcripts from nature, such as the palm-tree, need no labels. When it is remembered, too, that the process by which they were produced gave no opportunity for the correction of original blunders, and that the plaques do not bear any evidences of finishing touches subsequent to the casting, it will be agreed that these metal reliefs must be accorded a high place in the annals of untutored art. And they are a fitting climax to the objects of a gallery so rich in proofs of man's steady advance in civilization.

CHAPTER VIII

THE ARTS OF LIFE

AMPLE evidence has been adduced in a previous chapter to show that even prehistoric man was not content that his belongings should be merely useful. His roughly-shaped axe of stone was probably as fatal in its blows as the polished model by which it was succeeded, and his rude splinter of flint as penetrating a point as the deftly-modelled arrowhead to which it gave place. And there was no necessity for him to take up a fragment of bone and decorate it with an animal form, or spend laborious hours over carving a mammoth tusk into the likeness of a reindeer's head. But to say there was "no necessity" is doing prehistoric man an injustice. Near akin as he was to the brute creation, he had a sense of beauty, and that he was not content with the misshapen forms of his weapons or with the bare surfaces of the bones scattered around his cave is sufficient proof that that sense of beauty demanded some sort of expression.

How that feeling persisted through the ages has been fully illustrated in the foregoing chapter. The Australian's boomerang did not find its mark in a more unerring manner because it was adorned with

complicated patterns, nor did the knife of the American Indian prove more deadly because its handle bore a carved resemblance to a human head. It matters not to what period of human history we turn; in some form or other evidence will be forthcoming to show that man's sense of beauty has been struggling for expression through countless centuries. As he advanced in power to give form to his thoughts and in his command over his material, it was natural that his tribute to his sense of beauty should become more marked. The further removed he was from the stress of life, the more attention he paid to the arts of life.

Thanks to the speculations of the philosophers, we have now reached a stage in the theory of æsthetics when the fine arts are hedged around and restricted to objects which have no relation to utility, but in earlier years man bothered himself not at all about such distinctions. This was so even in the sixteenth century, for Benvenuto Cellini was regarded as an artist even if he did design articles which were useful as well as beautiful. To-day a designer of salt-cellars would probably be dubbed a craftsman; in Cellini's age he was a comrade of Michel Angelo. As to whether it is a gain or loss to have so sharp a distinction drawn between the absolutely beautiful and that which is useful as well as beautiful, need not be discussed; what is to the point is that there are several departments of the

British Museum which illustrate the happy blend of the two.

As showing how useful objects gradually took an artistic form the department of coins and medals has undeniable claims upon the visitor's attention. Here, of course, is a case where utility was the prime original motive. A world without money is unthinkable to the natives of civilized lands. Take away the medium which provides a standard of comparative value, and social organization falls to pieces. Imagine the case of the tailor who "had only coats and wanted to buy bread or a horse;" how is he to decide how much bread he ought to receive for a coat, or how many coats he should give for a horse? "It is interesting," writes Dr. Tylor, "to see trade in its lowest form among such tribes as the Australians. The tough greenstone valuable for making hatchets is carried hundreds of miles by natives, who receive from other tribes in return the prized objects of their districts, such as red ochre to paint their bodies with." The savage still has to barter in kind, but the civilized world has for so long enjoyed the convenience of money or its equivalent that little thought is paid to what it represents.

Practically nothing is known of the long process by which man eliminated cumbersome articles of exchange and arrived at the use of metals. It is agreed, however, that the Greek coinage is the old-

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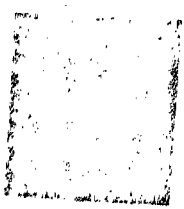
BRONZE HEAD OF GIRL FROM BENIN.



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BRONZE HANDLE OF LITTER.

est in existence, a fact which lends unique interest to the frames of Greek coins which may be found in the Room of Greek and Roman Life. The earliest of these dates from about 700 B. C., and is a piece of electrum shaped somewhat like a bean. Here we have utility and nothing more. Much the same may be said of all the other coins in Frame I, even though they may include a Persian gold daric, and examples from Macedon with a figure representing a lion devouring a bull, for all these belong to what is known as the archaic period. But the examples in Frame II take us a step further toward the combination of the beautiful with the useful. The coins in this case were minted at Athens, Thrace, and Syracuse, and are characterized "by an increased delicacy in the rendering of details, and a true understanding of the anatomical structure of the human body, and, towards the close of the period, by greater freedom of movement, every effort being then directed to realize ideal conceptions, a complete mastery of technical skill having been already attained." But the climax is reached in Frame III, the contents of which belong to the period 400-336 B. C. It was now the custom to adorn the obverses of the coins with heads of mythological characters, which have proved of great value for the light they have thrown on contemporary conceptions of the various gods. "Not only is the memory of lost statues preserved to us in the designs of an-

cient coins, but those of Greece afford admirable examples of that skill by which her sculptors attained their great renown. The excellence of the designs of very many Greek coins struck during the period of the best art is indeed so great that, were it not for their smallness, they would form the finest series of art studies in the world." How deserved is this eulogy will be admitted by all who study the tetradrachm of Amphipolis with its wistful head of Apollo, the silver stater of Pandosia with its finely modelled head of Hera Lakinia, or the dekadrachm of Syracuse with its spirited obverse and reverse. The other frames from IV to VII represent further stages in the history of Greek coinage and are specially instructive for the proof they afford of the possibility of decline in artistic expression even when the designers have superb models to guide them. But the contents of Frame VIII make amends, for here are some admirable examples of Greek portraiture, including striking if idealized heads of Ptolemy I, Lysimachus, Mithridates VI, Perseus of Macedon, Alexander, and Cleopatra.

Although not so artistic, the Jewish coins in the lower portion of Frame VIII are of supreme interest for the assistance they give in attaching concrete ideas to the various kinds of money mentioned in the Bible. Those familiar with the New Testament will recall that three kinds of money are mentioned therein, that is, gold, silver, and brass, and it is of

absorbing interest to gaze upon specimens of the Roman denarius or "penny" of the Gospels, the drachm of the parable of the woman who had ten of those pieces, the "mite" of the poor widow, and the "uttermost farthing" of Matthew.

Further examples of the coins of many nations, including those of the Romans, ancient and mediæval India, Great Britain, etc., may be inspected in great numbers in the room of the department. The British examples start from Anglo-Saxon times and are continued down to our own day. This series will illustrate once more the possibility of decadence, for when one compares the artistic nobles of Edward III and the three-pound pieces of Charles I with the jubilee coins of Victoria it is painfully obvious that in modern days the element of beauty has been entirely ignored. That fact, however, must not be allowed to outweigh the many proofs which other coins have afforded as to the possibility of blending beauty with utility.

If the visitor passes now to the Asiatic Room on the upper floor of the museum he will find himself surrounded by a bewildering wealth of examples of pottery and porcelain and other works of art from Japan, China, India and Persia. As was the case in the department of coins, these objects will illustrate once more how articles of utility were at first made in the rudest form and then gradually assumed shapes and decorations which gave them the

added element of beauty. For example, in wall-cases 1 to 9 there is a collection of utensils used in ceremonial tea-drinking most of which are exceedingly primitive, but the forerunners of utensils which would adorn any table. Perhaps, however, the most convincing proofs of the application of art to objects intended primarily for a practical purpose are provided by the series of Japanese netsukés. Notwithstanding its unfamiliar name, the netsuké was nothing more nor less than a button, and was used to fix in the girdle of the Japanese that little medicine-box which used to be an essential article of his wardrobe, as unfailing a companion, indeed, as the pocket-knife of the Westerner. Now it is obvious that there was no necessity for the netsuké being different from an ordinary button so far as its utility was concerned, but that doctrine did not commend itself to the art-loving Japanese. Hence the pains which were spent on carving the netsuké, and transforming its diminutive surface into pictures of mythology, folk-lore, and representations of national life. This tribute to the sense of beauty is also illustrated by the beautifully-carved sword-guards which are in the succession of the decorated Australian boomerang.

In the Glass and Ceramic Gallery and in the ante-room of that apartment the arts of life are still further illustrated. The wall-cases of the latter are given up to a remarkable collection of English

pottery and porcelain, the first eight cases exhibiting numerous specimens dating from Norman times to the beginning of the seventeenth century. At that early period the potter's art was not confined to specific localities as in later years, so there is no question of " schools " to bother the visitor. He is free to study the various forms from the evolutionary standpoint and will doubtless find much interest in tracing the gradual development towards more artistic examples. The style of pottery known as " slip-ware " because of the liquid form of the clay while it was being ornamented, is copiously illustrated in wall-cases 9 to 20, the examples including dishes, candlesticks, bowls, and other articles. Other varieties such as Staffordshire ware, Fulham stoneware, Chelsea and Derby ware, etc., are represented by numerous specimens. In the gallery itself worthy prominence is given to a fine collection of Wedgwood, the work of the famous potter who holds so distinguished a place in the history of ceramics for his inventive faculty and the artistic products of his kilns. Many of the examples of English Delft are quaintly interesting, particularly those which are inscribed with the doggerel lines so popular in past generations.

Continental and other foreign pottery is well represented by examples from Holland, Germany, Italy, Spain, France, Turkey, and Persia. The gallery is also notable for its collection of glass, which

ranges from specimens of ancient Egyptian manufacture to the exquisite cups and vases of the Venetian school. It will be observed that in the majority of cases these glass objects were designed as much for use as ornament, particularly the drinking-glasses, the bottles, the lamps, and even the cinerary urns of Roman make. Than the examples of Venetian glass it would be difficult to imagine any articles more worthy to be regarded as art products. It is well known of course that glass-making was practised in Egypt, Assyria, and Rome, but it reached its greatest perfection in Venice, where it began to be followed in the fifth century. By the thirteenth century the glass-makers of Venice had reached the dignity of an incorporated body, and in their processions were wont to carry decanters, scent-bottles, and even weights and measures as examples of their skill. It has been well pointed out that the peculiar merits of Venetian glass are the elegance of form and the surprising lightness of the substance of which the vessels are made, qualities which are notably illustrated by the examples in the museum. Those examples also show how perfectly art may be blended with utility.

For diversified interest none of the sections of the museum devoted to the arts of life can compare with the Mediæval Room, which is also situated on the upper floor of the building. The wall and table-cases of this apartment are particularly rich in ob-

jects related in the main to the more æsthetic side of civilized life, embracing as they do examples of religious art and ornate specimens of the utensils and implements of daily existence. The room is admirably arranged, most articles of a specific kind being grouped conveniently together. The one exception, that of table-case A, may be forgiven in view of the historical interest of its contents. Here are numerous relics of past ages which conjure up visions of fair and unfortunate ladies and brave knights and immortal poets. There lies a pocket-dial engraved with the arms of the Earl of Essex, the passionate and impulsive favourite of Elizabeth; near by is the astrolabe made for Henry VIII; in another corner is the coffin-plate of Mary of Modena, keeping company with a garter-plate of Sir Anthony Browne. That state-sword once knew the hand-clasp of Edward V, that dress-sword was worn by Edward Gibbon, this punch-bowl, carved from the wood of Shakespeare's mulberry tree, has been raised full often to the lips of Robert Burns. And yonder "pretty bowl of wood" is the same that stood before Shelley when he indited his poetical letter to Maria Gisborne:

"A pretty bowl of wood — not full of wine,
But quicksilver; that dew which the gnomes drink
When at their subterranean toil they swink,
Pledging the demons of the earthquake, who
Reply to them in lava."

Perhaps, however, believers in the occult will find more to interest them in that orange-shaped and orange-sized piece of solid pink tinted glass, the wonder-working crystal of the notorious Dr. Dee, whose circular wax-tablets fittingly keep it company. That is the holy stone which the astrologer declared was given him by an angel.

We shall never learn when man first became conscious of time, or when he began dividing the year into months, the month into weeks, the week into days, and the days into hours and minutes; all that is known is that the sun-dial, his most primitive measurer of the fleeting hours, dates back at least two thousand years. In its earliest form it was a fixed instrument, and although that type has long been obsolete for practical purposes it yet survives as an adornment of Old World gardens. Long after it had been perfected for use on a church-wall or a garden pedestal, the dial was made in a portable form, and examples of the various shapes it took in the olden days are exhibited with the old clocks and watches preserved in wall-cases 21 to 26 and in table-cases G and K. Among the specimens are examples of the cup-dial, the form of which is indicated by its name; the pillar-dial, an upright cylinder with a movable style; the ring-dial, and the armillary-dial; and the nocturnal, which was intended to tell the time at night. In connection with these devices for telling the time o' day attention

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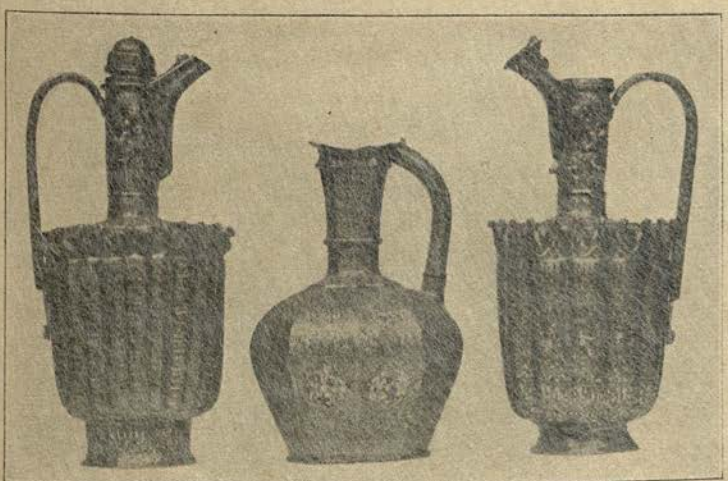
ENGLISH AND OTHER CHALICES.



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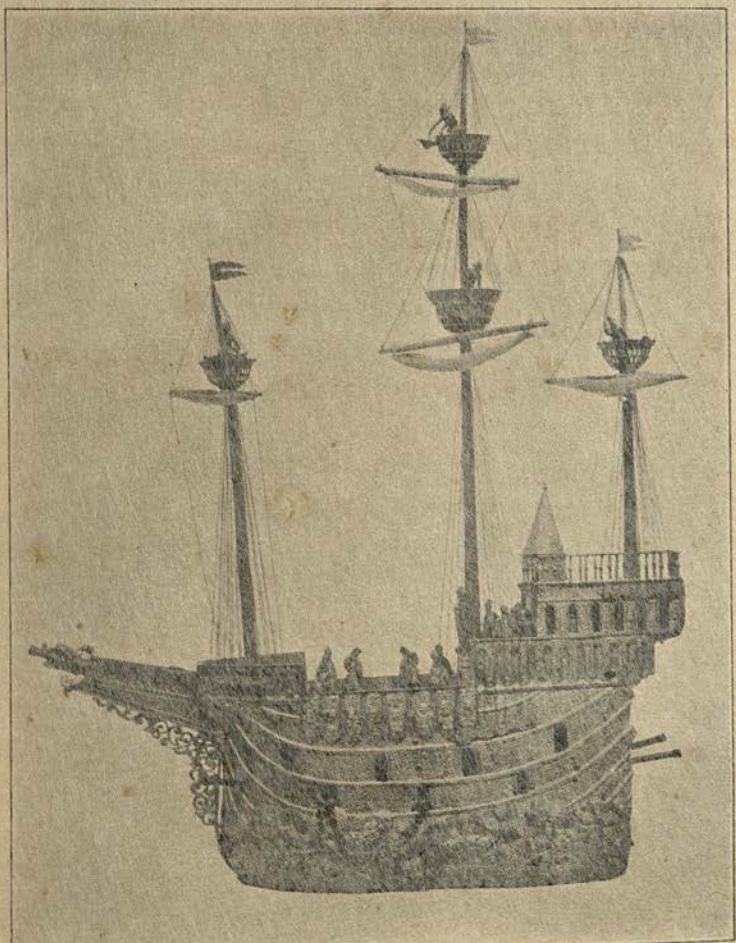
SARACENIC EWERS.



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CLOCK MADE FOR THE EMPEROR RUDOLPH II.

should also be given to the examples of the astrolabe, which, in addition to its use for taking the altitude of the sun at sea, was sometimes employed as a sun-dial. Some of the portable dials were complicated enough, and difficult to read, but they were simplicity itself compared with the astrolabe. For proof whereof let the curious turn to Chaucer's treatise on the astrolabe, written for the edification of his "litell Lowis," but puzzling enough for a mature man. It is pointed out that the prime defect of the early portable dials was "that when they were used about midday it was first necessary to determine whether noon was already past or not," but even in their better forms the dials of the good old times were evidently tricky things to manipulate.

As was the case with the earliest dials, the first clocks were fixtures in church-towers or castle-walls. In that form they date back to about the thirteenth century. Exactly when a substitute for the driving-weights and long chains was discovered is undecided, but the portable clock was certainly in existence by the beginning of the sixteenth century, and the wall and table-cases mentioned above contain numerous examples by which the visitor can trace its subsequent evolution. The fantastic time-piece in the form of a ship, which is thought to have been made for the Emperor Rudolph II, is a pertinent illustration of man's passion to adorn the useful.

Some of these time measures have an added interest from the fact of their having been in the possession of famous owners, for one of the small English watches is said to have been the property of Oliver Cromwell and another belonged to George III. Apart from the too ornate timepiece of Rudolph II, it will be observed that numerous examples are remarkable for their artistic appearance. One of the most atttactive models, too, that made by Bartholomew Newsum about 1590, illustrates the early custom of providing only an hour-hand. Other models show the quaint forms affected in the sixteenth century, such as skulls, books, flowers, crosses, and animals. It will also be noted that the earliest clocks were innocent of covering glasses, their place being taken by perforated metal covers. How greatly the prices of timepieces varied in the sixteenth century is illustrated by entries in the accounts of the Rutland family of that period, which show that while a stone dial cost five shillings and a watch and two compass-dials cost three pounds, five pounds ten shillings were paid for "a clocke and quarter clocke."

Interesting as are the associations connected with some of the objects mentioned above, none of them, nor any other specimens exhibited in the room, can compare with the Crystal of Lothair, an engraved gem of the ninth century, for the stirring vicissitudes through which it has passed. The inscription

on the crystal, which is shown in table-case F, sets forth that it was engraved by order of Lothair, King of the Franks, but in the tenth century it had passed into the possession of the wife of the Count of Florennes. Acting on the principle that what was his wife's was his, the count one day handed the crystal to a canon of Rheims in pledge for a horse to which he had taken a liking. Shortly afterwards, having raised the money to redeem the jewel, the count repaired to the monk, who, however, denied all knowledge of the transaction. And it was not until the count summoned his retainers and besieged and set fire to the church that the defaulting churchman, in his effort to escape, ran into the count's arms and was discovered to have the crystal on his person. But remorse overtook the soldier in his old age, and to placate his conscience for his sacrilege he bequeathed the crystal to the Abbey of Waulsort, where it remained for eight centuries. The French Revolution led to the scattering of the monks, and the jewel disappeared until the middle of the last century, when it was sold for twelve francs to a French collector who was informed that it had been found in the river Meuse. That it has survived all its adventures at the small expense of a crack across its surface is not the least wonderful part of its history. Happily the blemish has not defaced any material part of the scenes connected with the exciting adventures of Susanna with which

it is decorated. The other engraved gems of the room include some exquisite cameos and reliefs in pearl-shell.

No fewer than five wall-cases, in addition to one table-case, are devoted largely to objects in enamel. While it requires the knowledge of an expert to appreciate to the full the value of this collection, many of the articles are of such rare beauty that they must appeal to even those who are ignorant of the shades of difference between champlevé or any other variety. There are numerous examples of all kinds of work, cloisonné, enamel in open work, translucent enamels, incrusted and mixed enamels, and painted enamels. The articles are even more varied than the processes, including as they do brooches, plaques, reliquaries, panels, candlesticks, portraits, ciboriums, medallions, etc. And the subjects depicted range from Old Testament episodes to the legends of mythology. The enamels, indeed, are a picture gallery in themselves, now portraying the labours of Hercules or a group of Jupiter, Juno and other deities; anon the history of Psyche or the Sibyls; and then a maternal moment in the life of the Virgin, or the tragic scenes of the Crucifixion. The collection is specially rich in examples of the four periods of the painted enamels of Limoges, from the earliest products of the late fifteenth century to the decadent work of the eighteenth century.

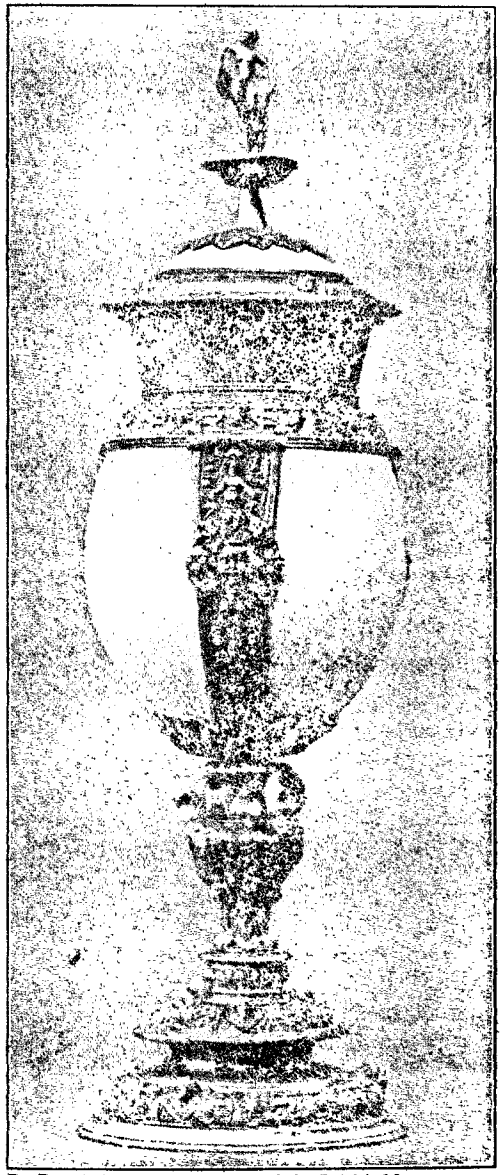
Another type of vertu, namely carvings in ivory,

is also richly illustrated in the Mediæval Room. These objects will be found in wall-cases 35 to 43 and in table-case F. The ivories of the pre-Gothic period include some striking examples of the fifth and sixth centuries, while the later ivories are representative of the work done from the thirteenth to the fifteenth centuries. At first the sculptors confined themselves to the decoration of writing tablets and caskets, but subsequently they directed their labours to the adornment of pastoral staffs, combs used by churchmen in connection with the celebration of the mass, crucifixes, buckets for holy water, and then, still later, chessmen, draughtsmen, and portrait medallions. Naturally the earliest examples had for their subjects incidents connected with Biblical characters and episodes, or episodes from the lives of the saints, but when art broke away from the influence of the church the ivory carvers turned to mythology or romance in much the same way as the workers in enamel.

As may be expected, jewelry of all kinds figures largely among the exhibits in this department. Bells and bracelets, brooches and buttons, chains and pendants are here in varied types; and the collection of rings is replete with interest for its completeness. The types of the latter range from the bow-rings of horn or crystal which were worn by archers on the thumb of the left hand and used for releasing the bow-string, to poison-rings such as

play so conspicuous a part in the stories of the olden time. There are cramp-rings, so called because, having been touched by a king, they were held to be a remedy for cramp and other ailments; decade-rings, which take their name from the ten knobs on their circumference which were used as an abbreviated rosary; episcopal and papal rings; magical rings, worn as a protection against disease or the enmity of man; and posy rings, that is those engraved with a motto or verse of a religious or affectionate nature.

Further illustration of the artistic skill which man has expended upon objects for the adornment of his person or his home is provided in the Waddeson Bequest Room. For the valuable collection preserved in that gallery the museum is indebted to the noble generosity of Baron Ferdinand Rothschild, a former Trustee, who stipulated that the objects should be preserved together in one room named after his Waddeson mansion where they were originally kept. These art specimens number upwards of two hundred and sixty, and are naturally of a kind obtainable only by a collector of unlimited wealth. They include remarkable and costly examples of cups and vases of rock crystal, jewels and personal ornaments, enamels, carvings in wood, glass vessels, arms and armour, and silver standing cups. The value of the collection may be judged from the fact that one single object, the Lyte jewel,



By Permission of the Trustees of the British Museum.

OSTRICH - EGG CUP.

By Permission of the Trustees of the British Museum.

ITALIAN CASKET.

cost Baron Rothschild nearly three thousand pounds. Apart from its price, however, the jewel is of interest for its association with the "wisest fool in Christendom." It has already been seen that James I had a weakness for antiquities and was keenly interested in pedigrees, especially his own. No doubt Thomas Lyte counted upon that fact when he drew up the "most royally ennobled genealogy" of James, which he had engrossed on vellum "fairer than any print" and illuminated with "admirable flourishes and painting." That the king studied this formidable family-tree with avidity goes without saying, and probably Thomas Lyte was not surprised when his labours were rewarded with a gift of the king's portrait in gold richly set with diamonds. Such was the origin of the Lyte jewel, which still survives while the genealogy for which it was the reward has wholly disappeared.

In artistic merit if not in cash value the Lyte jewel is exceeded by the circular medallions designed originally as adornments for the handles of a Greek litter. They belong to the third century before Christ and it is well affirmed that "the serene beauty of these heads places them in quite a different category from the great proportion of the rest of the collection." The wood carvings include a little tabernacle which is notable for the minute nature of its details, and two German portrait busts which were bought originally for four shillings.

One of the most ornate objects is a fine specimen of an ostrich egg elaborately mounted as a cup in silver, the date of which is 1554.

Some captious critics might be disposed to resent the use of the word "art" in connection with the objects described in the foregoing pages; if they agree with Ruskin in nothing else they subscribe to his dictum that "portable art — independent of all place — is for the most part ignoble art," and to his assertion that "the wild boar of silver which you use for a seal, or lock in a velvet case, is little likely to be so noble a beast as the bronze boar who foams forth the fountain from under his tusks in the market-place of Florence." Whatever may be the truth of such assertions, no one will question the application of the term "art" to the contents of one other division of the museum which remains to be noticed, that is, the Department of Prints and Drawings.

So far as the general visitor is concerned the riches of that department are for the most part hidden from view. It will be observed that on the east side of the Asiatic Saloon there is a vestibule leading to another apartment but that it is guarded by one of those barriers which warn off all save students. That is the entrance to the students' room of the Prints and Drawings department, for the constant use of which, as in the case of the Reading and Manuscript Rooms, a ticket is necessary. If,

however, the visitor is interested in the engravings and drawings of artists, knows what he wants to see, and intends but a brief stay, he is free to the courtesy of the department by signing his name and address in the book kept for such records. This is an arrangement designed specially for the convenience of such as have but a limited time to spend in London, and is not generally known. Those, however, who wish to make frequent use of the room must, as stated above, apply to the Director in the usual way. The regular student's ticket is available for six months, but is subject to renewal on request.

Postponing for the moment a brief survey of the contents of the department, attention should be directed to the fact that in the gallery leading off the Glass and Ceramic Room there are held periodical exhibitions of prints and drawings which are open without restriction to all visitors. Now and again the happening of some notable event is made the occasion of a special exhibition of pictures bearing upon that event, but as a general rule the contents of the gallery are changed every two or three years. Thus in the last decade there have been exhibitions of the drawings and etchings of Rembrandt, of drawings and sketches by various old masters of the English school, and of mezzotints from the Cheylesmore collection; while at the time of writing the walls are given up to examples of

painting as practised in China and Japan from the fourth to the nineteenth century.

Even if the exhibitions were changed with great frequency, say every month, it would be many years before the varied stores of the department were exhausted. The title of the department indicates that its treasures are of two kinds, that is, prints, meaning thereby engravings, etchings, mezzotints, aquatints, wood engravings, and lithographs; and drawings, namely, original sketches as they left the hands of their creators. The collection is of great range and variety, and has been in constant growth since the foundation of the museum. It will be remembered that the treasures of Sir Hans Sloane included many pictures, and that among the bequests of the earliest benefactors were the richly-stored portfolios of the Rev. C. M. Cracherode. Subsequent purchases and gifts have been too numerous for complete tabulation, but some idea of the money expended in enriching the department may be gathered from the fact that six hundred pounds were paid for a single tiny drawing by Raphael. The gifts of generous art-lovers have been numerous and of great value, including Ellis Ellis's unique extra-illustrated copy of the Letters of Madame de Sévigné, extending to thirty-eight volumes embellished with upwards of nine thousand portraits, views, etc.; a complete set of the catalogues of the Royal Academy from 1769 to 1838

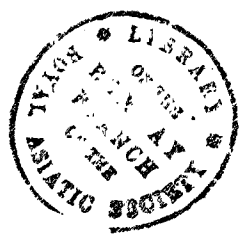
in thirteen volumes; Pennant's account of London in fourteen fully illustrated volumes, etc.

None but those acquainted with the minute details of the history of art can appreciate to the full the fine equipment of the department, but a few particulars as to the various schools represented may be offered for their suggestive value. Of the Italian school, for example, there are original drawings by upwards of three hundred artists, including such sons of fame as Bellini, Perugino, Titian, Michel Angelo, and Leonardo Da Vinci; of the German school there are drawings by upwards of fifty artists, with Dürer and Holbein among the number; the Dutch and Flemish schools are represented by drawings by upwards of two hundred and ninety artists; the French by upwards of seventy and the Spanish by upwards of forty. Needless to say, the English school also has a strong showing. And none of these figures take account of the prints by artists belonging to the countries mentioned. In fact nothing short of exhaustive catalogues, of which more than fifty volumes have been prepared from time to time, can give an adequate idea of the riches of this one department of the museum.

Could the earliest benefactors of the British Museum visit its galleries to-day, how gratified they would be to think of their own share in the creation of that great institution. It might cause them a momentary pang to discover that the collections in

which they took so much pride and which they imagined so complete have been overshadowed by accessions of which they knew nothing and never dreamt, but as they wandered through the richly-stocked and well-ordered rooms, and came to realize the liberal manner in which this treasure house of learning is administered for the instruction of all without respect of position or means, that feeling would give place to a sense of unqualified delight that their labours have had issue in such a result. So far as names and dates and incidents are concerned, it is possible to place the history of the museum on record; what is not possible is any account, even the most tentative, of the far-reaching influence its treasures have exerted in enriching the minds of its countless visitors, and in clarifying and widening the scope of human knowledge.

THE END.



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